

## Bale Grazing Saves Money, Reduces Labor

By the end of November, Neil Boyd has most of his winter-feeding chores nearly finished. Big round bales are lined up across his 40-acre winter-feeding pasture with a unique electric cross-fencing system that gives his 100 beef cows access to six 800-lb. bales at a time.

The Fairview, Alberta, Canada, grain and beef producer says he's been tweaking his bale grazing system for 10 years.

"I don't have to start machinery up in the winter, to plow snow or haul hay. All I have to do is move a wire," Boyd explains. "Another important thing is that the manure stays in the pasture rather than in the corral."

The labor savings begin with baling. Instead of hauling and stacking bales back at the farm, Boyd keeps his large bales in the hay field until October or November, when he moves them to the winter pasture and lines them up for bale grazing. Each group of six bales is about 30 ft. apart with the "faces" in

the same direction. The surface with twine - Boyd uses sisal, which decomposes - touches the ground.

Boyd divides his pasture in four long sections with electric fences of high-tensile wire. The bales serve as posts for temporary fencing in the opposite direction. Sharpened 6-ft. fiberglass posts are jabbed horizontally about 1 1/2 ft. into the face of the bale. Boyd attaches poly wire to insulators on the other ends of the posts and connects the wire to the high-tensile wire rows in the pasture. The wire creates a fence to keep the cows away from that set of bales, while they eat six other bales. After two days, Boyd pulls the posts and wires out of the bales and the cows eat them. He restrings the wire in the bales two rows away.

"I have two rows of wire," Boyd explains. "In case the cattle break through one fence, there is another one to stop them."

In two days the cattle clean up all the hay.



Electric cross-fencing system gives Neil Boyd's 100 beef cows access to six 800-lb. round bales at a time.

When it's very cold, Boyd moves the fence more often.

"In 2006 we had 5 ft. of snow and we were able to feed with this system," Boyd says. His cows eat snow for water and find protection from the wind in the trees and brush. He uses bale grazing from January to June.

Boyd's methods, along with ideas from four other Canadian producers, are detailed in a downloadable booklet on [www.areca.ab.ca](http://www.areca.ab.ca), the

site for the Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta. The information is free and valuable to anyone raising beef in regions with snow, Havens says.

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## Drainage Pipe Made From Recycled Barrels

Scott McCann of Freedom, Calif. needed to find a way to minimize erosion on the steep banks on his property, so he devised a low-cost system that's been working well.

"I made 150 ft. of large diameter drainage pipe using 55-gal. black plastic drums. They had been used for transporting chlorine and were being thrown away," McCann says. "They rinsed them out thoroughly and were more than happy to give them to me so they didn't have to go to the further expense of destroying the heavy duty, crosslink plastic drums."

He cut off the top one-third of the barrels because of the way they bowed out in the middle. It helped them fit together tighter. At the bottom of the barrels, McCann cut off the outer plastic ring, leaving an inner plastic lip for strength. McCann then joined the 50 barrel tubes together, fastening them with 2-in. long by 1/2-in. dia. galvanized bolts and washers (two at each joint).

Using just two bolts lets the huge pipe

snake down the steep but rolling embankment. The pipe diverts runoff and minimizes erosion.

He was also able to turn the leftover 1/3 barrel ends into a marketable product by cutting out handles in the sides. He sold them to a local bamboo producer who grew bamboo plants in them for sale.

"My drainage pipe works well to stop erosion of the hillside from heavy downpours," McCann says. "To protect it from UV damage, I stretched chicken wire over the pipe, hooking it on the bolts that stick out, so that the natural vegetation could get a foothold. Vines quickly grew right over it, and the pipe blends into its surroundings as a result."

McCann is willing to provide plans and advice for a fee if there's interest.

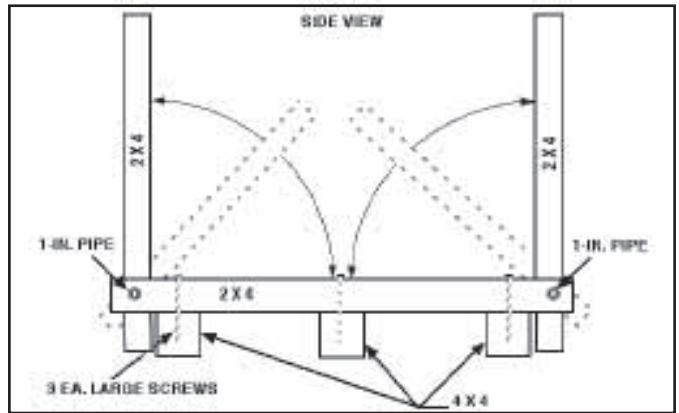
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McCann made 150 ft. of large diameter drainage pipe using 55-gal. black plastic drums. Huge pipe snakes down a steep embankment to divert runoff and minimize erosion.



Harlan Faust stacks wood from his splitter directly onto homemade pallets that he can easily move around with his Bobcat.



Sides fold out quickly to hold wood. When empty they fold down flat for storage.

## Collapsible Firewood Pallets

"My wife and I have been splitting wood for many years. Recently we came up with a way to cut down on time and handling," says Harlan Faust of Long Prairie, Minn.

"We used to just stack split wood on the ground, and then later move the large piles of wood by hand into our shed. Now we stack wood from the splitter directly into homemade collapsible pallets, and use a Bobcat to

move the pallets around. The pallets can be easily stacked when empty."

The pallets measure 6 ft. by 44 in. and 3 ft. high when they're open. They're made with three 4 by 4's at the bottom which the Bobcat's pallet forks slide under. Four 2 by 4's are bolted on edge across the top of the 4 by 4's. Four 3 1/2-ft. 2 by 4's at each end of the 6-ft. wide pallet lay loosely on edge across

the 4 by 4's. A 1/2-in. dia. steel pipe runs through the ends of the 2 by 4's on each side of the pallet, allowing the short 2 by 4's to pivot to an upright position to form the sides. When collapsed, each pallet is just 8 in. high.

"To load firewood, we just fold out the sides. The bottom end of each upright is blocked by the 4 by 4 so the sides stay up while we load up the wood," says Harlan.

"Each pallet holds about 1/2 cord of wood.

"We cut the firewood into 24-in. lengths so there's room to store two rows of wood on each pallet. When the pallet is full it's about 5 ft. high. The collapsed pallets are easy to move in a pile when emptied."

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