

“Flake Feeder” Makes Range Feeding A One-Person Job

Feeding hay to range cattle is typically a two-person job - one person driving tractor and the other pitching off hay. The Fodder-Flaker-Feeder (FFF) bale feeder lets one person feed hay without getting out of the tractor cab, except to remove bale strings.

Most other bale feeders chop hay into feed bunks. Denzil Robbins of Baker City, Oregon, designed his feeder to flake off the hay to keep seeds and leaves intact. It will feed any large size square bale up to 2,000 lbs.

Up to nine bales, with strings on the side, are loaded on the conveyor bed, which tilts up to the front to self load the bales. All but a couple of strings are removed. The remaining strings are taken off after the bale moves in front of the hydraulic-driven pressure plate, which pushes the bale through large rotors that peel off sections of hay.

“The rotors aren’t power-driven in any way,” Robbins says. “The bale turns the rotors.”

As an experienced service technician, Robbins believes in keeping things simple. The operator uses a remote lever in the cab to control how fast the pressure plate moves. Feeding doesn’t need to be slow, Robbins notes. An entire bale can be fed out in 30 seconds. One large cattle herd owner purchased two FFF feeders to feed 40 large bales a day per machine. He saves money in labor and workers compensation claims, because instead of two men per feeder, one man can safely feed bales.

Robbins was inspired to create his feeder after hearing horror stories about injured operators trying to do a two-person job solo, by

running back and forth between the tractor moving in low gear and the feed trailer. Besides human injuries, calves occasionally get run over because of a driverless moving tractor.

Robbins introduced his first prototype in March 2007, sold it, made a few modifications and partnered with Bootsma LLC in Baker City to manufacture the bale feeders.

“The response has been great. There’s nothing out there that does what we do,” Robbins says. “We’re half the cost of a processor.”

Prices start at \$5,500 for the 5 by 11-ft feeder attachment, which customers can put on their own trailers, to \$18,000 for a new feeder on a new 24-ft bed with a tandem axle. Besides being used for feeding hay, the trailers can be used to transport hay when it is baled.

“Anybody who’s run one, says it’s worked exactly the way we said it would work,” Robbins says. He’s also accomplished his goal of keeping it simple. A veterinarian purchased an FFF bale feeder, then had to be out of town. His wife fed the cattle with the feeder without any problems.

To see how it works, check out the video on Robbins’ website.

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Fodder-Flake Feeder lets one person feed hay without getting out of the tractor cab, except to remove bale strings. Large rotors peel off sections of hay.



Flake feeder will feed large size square bales up to 2,000 lbs.

Cardboard Crusher Makes Cheap Firewood “Logs”

Why spend money on firewood when cardboard will do?

That’s what Phil Orlovski wondered, and he did something about it. He modified a small hydraulic press to convert cardboard - and other household paper waste - into “logs” for his wood stoves.

“My cardboard logs produce about as much heat as wood. It’s a cheap way to heat my home and garage,” says the Imlay City, Mich., man. “But my main goal was to reduce the waste of materials that would otherwise get thrown away. I use anything that will burn, from cardboard to empty feed bags to grocery bags to 12-pack pop cartons. I burn the cardboard logs in a pot belly stove in my garage, and in a wood burning stove in my home’s basement.”

He bought a new 12-ton bottle jack press for \$99. The jack had a 6-in. lift which was inadequate so he replaced it with an 8-ton jack with a 12-in. lift. He used 1/4-in. thick metal to make a 7-in. sq., 15-in. long rectangular metal “smash container” and bolted it on top of the lift.

To convert cardboard into logs, he wets the cardboard for a few minutes in big plastic barrels that catch rain water off his shed. Then he packs the cardboard into the container, folding it so it will fit. “It folds down into the container much easier when it’s wet,” says Phil.

Once the container is full, he places a 6-in. sq., 14-in. long pressure-treated board on top. Then he pumps the jack until maximum compression is achieved. After removing the smashed cardboard, he ties each bundle together with baling twine. He leaves the bundles outside to dry for two days to a week,

depending on weather conditions. Then he stacks the cardboard logs in a shed until he’s ready to use them.

“I’ve used this idea for about three years and it works great,” says Phil. “Cardboard logs burn great as long as they’re dry. My total cost was less than \$200 - and my operating costs are almost nothing. This process requires no electricity or fuel of any kind.”

The material he uses comes from various sources. “I get some of the cardboard for free from a local store. I use a lot of 50-lb. feed bags for my livestock which work great, too. It takes 10 to 12 feed bags to make each log, and six cardboard boxes measuring 2 by 2 by 3 ft.”

When Phil welded the smashing container together he left some open space around the sides for water to drain out.

According to Phil after a while the water in the barrels can start to smell bad. “To solve the problem I just add a little pine cleaner to the water - it not only kills any mosquito larvae but also keeps my hands clean, too.”

Phil says he can make about five logs per hour. “Last year I made about 250 logs before the cold weather set in. I figure that 1,000 cardboard logs is equal to about 1 1/2 cords of wood.”

He says making cardboard logs is a good way to teach responsibility to kids. “It teaches kids the value of recycling, and also gives them something productive to do. If you spend a half hour a day on this, it won’t be long before you have a big pile of fuel.”

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Phil Orlovski modified a small hydraulic press to convert cardboard - and other household paper waste - into fuel for his wood stoves.

Deere G Mailbox

Ken Stonecipher, LaCrosse, Ind., took the front end of an old 1950 Deere G and made it into a new mailbox holder. He mounted it on a 4 by 6-in. piece of steel tubing with a 3-ft. square base welded to the bottom. The base is buried in the ground.

He made a little platform on front to hold the mailboxes, and painted it, adding new decals. Makes an eye-catching roadside attraction.

His friend, Jeff Brown, helped build it. Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ken Stonecipher, 20521 S. U.S. 421, LaCrosse, Ind. 46348 (ph 219 754-2497).



“It makes an eye-catching roadside attraction,” says Ken Stonecipher, who converted the front end of an old 1950 Deere G tractor into this mailbox holder.