



Log-loading tractor has a front-mounted boom that swings to either side.



Cab and boom rotates 180 degrees, allowing operator to load logs on back.

## Bi-Directional Loader Makes Log Handling Easier

"It can load logs from any direction and works better than anything else on the market," says Dominique Bherer, Maniwaki, Quebec, who recently sent FARM SHOW photos of an articulated, bi-directional, 4-WD log-loading tractor equipped with a front-mounted boom.

The machine was built by Andre Levesque in Quebec. According to Bherer, Levesque has spent almost 25 years building machines designed for small operators to transport logs out of the woods. He uses big truck parts that

are easy to replace. For example, the machine has two big non-locking truck differentials, one for each axle. It's powered by a Cat 62 CV engine.

What makes the machine really unique is the cab and boom design. The boom is front-mounted and can swing to either side a total of 180 degrees, and the cab rides on a turntable that allows it to rotate 180 degrees, allowing the operator to load logs on back. You use the boom to grab the log, then rotate the cab to face backward and lay the log down

on the truck.

"Most machines have the boom located behind the cab so they can load only from the back. This one lets you use the boom to load logs onto a truck in front of you, or onto the back of the machine itself," says Bherer.

Another advantage is that the machine is fairly light and rides on big wheels so it doesn't tear up the ground as much as other machines. "It doesn't ride on tracks so it's a lot cheaper to build and to maintain. It weighs only about half as much as bigger log load-

ers and costs only about one third as much. Also, at 16 ft. long it's much shorter so it can turn short around trees," says Bherer.

Another nice feature is that the engine is located behind the cab and can be swung out to the side for maintenance work.

The machine sells for about \$90,000.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dominique Bherer, 473 St. Lionel, Maniwaki, Quebec, Canada J9E 1M5 (ph 819 449-3276; www.lestransporteurslevesque.com).



Joist Jack is a 6 1/2-ft. long steel strap that adds strength to the center of a truss across a 7 1/2-ft. span.

## Strengthen Building Frames Fast

Eliminate floor squeaks, springy floors and roof sag fast with easy-to-install products from Ridgeway Structural Systems. The JoistJack adds strength to the center of a truss across a 7 1/2-ft. span, while the SuperJack reinforces even longer spans. Working between rafters, the XPress adds the equivalent of a 12-in. I-beam to the length of trusses. At truss ends, the CornerCam strengthens and straightens sagging joists.

"Barns and house roofs can sag under snow load over time and floors can be too springy," says Rick Plavidal, inventor of the two devices. "With these devices, you can simply screw them into place and adjust them as needed to strengthen the floor."

The JoistJack is a 6 1/2 ft. long steel strap. Both ends are screwed to a joist with the belly of the strap hanging below and parallel to the joist. Spreader bolts at either end of the strap belly push against the joist, while either end of the strap pulls against the same joist. Similar to drawing back a bowstring, the tension forces the joist to bow upward slightly. The SuperJack uses braces and threaded rod to achieve the same affect.

Necessity was the mother of invention in the case of the JoistJack. "I had a springy floor in the kitchen and thought there should be a way to strengthen it," says Plavidal. "Since then, I've also used it to reinforce a floor under a wood stove."

The triangular CornerCam is installed against truss or rafter ends and their supporting wall. The spreader bolt extends from the point where the truss meets the wall to the center of the CornerCam's exposed and slightly inverted side. When the bolt is turned, it forces the exposed side to straighten, pushing against and strengthening the joist.

The XPress floor stiffening system uses spreader sets that fit between joists to change the pattern of the floor. Pretensioning the



CornerCam is used at truss ends to strengthen and straighten sagging joists.



XPress floor stiffening system uses spreader sets that fit between joists to change the pattern of the floor. It adds the equivalent of a 12-in. I-beam to the length of trusses.

XPress members stiffens the floor. When weight is applied, floor movement is dampened and the weight is transferred across all the joists.

The CornerCam and the JoistJack are unit priced at \$47.50, the SuperJack at \$97.50, and the Xpress at \$17.50. All can be ordered direct from Ridgeway, though Plavidal is seeking retail and wholesale distributors.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rick Plavidal (ph 970 596-1787; rick@ridgewaystructural.com; www.ridgewaystructural.com).



Pitcher made this 3-pt. mounted rotary ditcher by cutting the bottom out of an old Gehl silage blower. He used 2 by 6 box steel to make a 3-pt. mounting bracket.

## Silage Blower Makes Low-Cost Ditcher

"We built it because we couldn't justify the cost of a commercial ditcher," says L.D. Pitcher about the 3-pt. mounted rotary ditcher he made out of an old Gehl silage blower.

The Montrose, Ill., man farms mostly flat ground which can be slow to drain in certain spots. He uses the rig primarily to clean out existing ditches, usually during the fall.

"It's pretty simple. Basically, all I did was cut the bottom out of a silage blower that I already had," says Pitcher.

After cutting off about one fourth of the bottom, he used 2 by 6 box steel to make a 3-pt. mounting bracket so he can carry it on back of a tractor.

The original paddles were welded to the flywheel and couldn't be replaced. To solve the problem he used 1/2-in. thick steel to build new, replaceable paddles. Then he drilled holes in the original paddles and bolted the new ones onto them. A skid plate on back

doubles as a depth gauge.

"We use an International Harvester 7120 180 hp 2-WD tractor to pull it and go 2 to 3 in. deep per pass in low gear. It leaves a ditch with nice tapered sidewalls that we can plant right through. The blower discharges soil out at least 100 ft.," says Pitcher. "If we need more depth we just make more passes."

"The blower has a shear bolt which will break before any damage is done if the digger hits a rock. We only use it a day or two a year, which is why we couldn't justify a commercial unit. They sell for \$5,000 to \$6,000, whereas we spent less than \$500."

"I bought a new pto shaft, which was my biggest cost. I got the biggest pto I could because even though we go slow with the ditcher, it moves a lot of dirt so it pulls hard."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, L.D. Pitcher, 20706 N. 500<sup>th</sup> St., Montrose, Ill. 62445 (ph 217 924-4247).

## Poultry Waterer

Store-bought chicken waterers are expensive, and the ones with plastic bases don't always hold up to cold temperatures. So Holly Cicchirillo of Arizona makes her own waterers, using empty cat litter jugs.

She simply drills a pencil-size hole 1 in. above the base and sets it inside a water pan. Instead of filling the water pan every day, she gets up to three days before she has to refill the jug.

In the summer the jug tends to grow green algae, which the chickens love to pick out of the water when the jug has been rinsed and the algae flows out into the pan.

The jugs last 6 to 12 months, as after a



Cicchirillo drilled a pencil-size hole 1 in. above base of empty cat litter jug and set it inside a water pan.

while the threads tend to lose their air-tight quality from being repeatedly screwed on and off. Reprinted with permission from *Backyard Poultry* (www.backyardpoultrymag.com).