

Portable Shade Trailers

If you've ever wondered how to improve conditions for agricultural field crews who work in the sweltering sun, a California company has found a solution.

According to Dave Edwards of Valley Harvesting and Packing Inc., the company developed, patented and built portable shade units they use to provide workers with a cooler, more comfortable place to take breaks and eat lunch. This helps prevent heat-related, on-the-job illness and stress.

"Originally, we thought we would convert old cotton trailers to make these shade units, but then discovered too much would be involved to re-do them the way we wanted," Edwards says. "It was cheaper to just build it from scratch, so we ended up fabricating our own design."

The two-wheel, single axle trailer has a 4 by 4-in. center tube and can be pulled with a tractor, truck or bus. Three 8-ft. wide shade panels are covered with "85 per cent shade

cloth" which allows air movement. The center panel is stationary, while the other two are adjustable to the position of the sun. The side panels can be positioned horizontally, effectively tripling the size of the top panel, or they can hang down vertically. No support poles are needed for the side panels.

The trailers incorporate a couple of small tables, some retractable benches, and 10-gal. Igloo water coolers, where lunches and water are kept. Each system accommodates 18 to 20 people.

The trailer is moved along the field where crews are working, Edwards says. To facilitate ease of moving, each shade is on a cable that will collapse into the center so that a string can be tied around it to prevent wind damage.

Each trailer cost about \$6,000 to build. Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Valley Harvesting and Packing Inc., Heber, Calif.



A California company builds these portable shade units to provide workers with a cooler, more comfortable place to take breaks. The two-wheeled, single axle trailer has three 8-ft. wide panels covered with "85 percent shade cloth".



Pickup "plow" slides into receiver hitch, allowing you to bury lines fast and easy. It can dig down to 18 in. below grade.

Pickup "Plow" Lays In Cable, Pipe

No fancy trencher is needed for 2-in. dia. or less pipe, conduit or cable with this 4-WD pickup "plow". Simply slide the Hitch-N-Ditch into the pickup receiver hitch, and you can bury lines fast and easy.

"You can do in an hour what it takes 20 man hours to do by hand or 10 hours with a trencher and backfilling," says Christopher Montgomery, co-developer of the Hitch-N-Ditch.

With 50 years of electrical contracting between them, Montgomery and Tim Ramsey had done their share of trenching or waiting for a trencher to finish the job. Working in the sandy soils of northwest Florida, trenches had to be as wide as they were deep to prevent cave-ins. They figured there had to be a faster way.

Montgomery first tried pulling a moldboard-type plow behind his pickup to open a trench. Shifting sand was still a problem, and the trench still had to be filled in after the pipe or conduit was laid. However, they liked the idea of being able to hook a device into the receiver hitch of their pickup to lay underground lines.

"We came up with a design that digs up to 18 in. below grade with a small wedge attached to a blade to cut roots and things," he says. "We can attach a continuous length of pipe, conduit or cable so it lays itself."

Over a period of two years, they developed a prototype of the two component pieces in single unit molds to add strength.

The blade and wedge are at the bottom of an upright iron shaft that slides inside a bracket that fits into the receiver hitch. Multiple holes in the upright match up with a hole through the hitch unit. The operator can easily adjust working height simply by digging a hole to the desired depth, dropping the wedge to that depth and inserting a pin to lock it in place.

Underground lines can be installed at up to 5 mph. Best of all, the tool is priced at only \$289.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hitch-N-Ditch, 7634 McElvey Road, Panama City Beach, Fla. 32408 (ph 850 235-2600 or 850 258-2582; fax 850 235-0051; hitchnditch@knology.net; www.hitchnditch.com).



"My bulk food vacuum packing system gives me a seven-year-plus shelf life for dry goods," says inventor Danny Mizell.

Vacuum Packer Preserves Bulk Foods

Danny Mizell is ready for catastrophes of any kind, thanks to the bulk food vacuum packing system he built back in 1999.

He made it to prepare for Y-2K, the computer scare in 2000 that turned out to be a non-event.

"My vacuum packer gives me a seven-year-plus shelf life for dry goods," the Wendell, N.C. man explains. "It does a fine job."

The unit is a 24 by 18-in. chamber made from pvc pipe with 1/2-in. thick walls. A flat piece of plastic is glued on the bottom with silicone sealer, and another serves as a removable top lid. Mizell says he had the edges of the chamber milled very finely and smoothly, so the top and bottom would seal really well.

To complete the system, he bought a commercial vacuum pump like those used for air conditioning units or refrigeration, paying

about \$400.

"I use glass sealed jars to contain the food and can vacuum seal as many as eight quart-sized jars in the chamber at one time," he explains. "I just place the rings and lids on the jars but don't tighten them up before turning on the unit. When the vacuum reaches its peak, I shut it off, releasing the pressure suddenly with a ball valve. This air movement pulls the rubber rings down, slamming them onto the jars and sealing them. Then I tighten the lids by hand."

He still has 50 to 60 cases of vacuum packed food from 1999, which he dips into from time to time. It's still well preserved.

"I still like to have emergency food there because you just never know," he concludes.

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