



“Highway Weed” Fights Farm Erosion

Emerald Crown Vetch, a purple-flowered plant that's widely used along the nation's highways, can also be used as an erosion fighter on farms, says Rex Gogerty, Hubbard, Iowa, who plants the easy-to-maintain “highway weed” on slopes around his farm.

“It stops erosion and eliminates mowing on steep slopes since it stops growing at a height of about 12 in.,” says Gogerty. Since the crop reseeds itself each year, a stand of Crown Vetch should last virtually forever.

Gogerty establishes the crop on ditch banks by “plugging” or digging in crown vetch plants into existing grass. “That works

okay for small patches but the highway commissions and people seeding larger plots generally broadcast at least 10 lbs. of seed per acre along with a half bushel of oats for a nurse crop. It's easy to get started and spreads rapidly. Once up, it provides an attractive ground cover.”

Crown vetch is available from many seed growers and companies. (One Iowa source is Doug Hertz, Rt. 1, Box 42, Nevada, Iowa 50201 (ph 515 382-4547).

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rex Gogerty, Rt. 2, Box 60, Hubbard, Iowa 50122 (ph 515 487-7617).

No-Fail Way To Start Cat Tractor

“We found a never-fail way to start our older model D-6 Caterpillar tractor, which is normally started with a side-mount ‘pony motor’ that's difficult to maintain and often hard to start itself,” says Tim Prestin, Wenona, Ill.

“We simply back a small utility tractor up to the Cat and connect a standard pto shaft to each tractor. Then we use it to turn the Cat engine until oil pressure is up then we open the throttle about a quarter of the way to start it. We also start a Cat D-8 this way and have used the method successfully in temperatures down to 50° below zero wind chill.

“Most people say the idea won't work but they don't understand that the Caterpillar's rear pto runs counter-clockwise, looking at it from the rear.



“One caution is that you should be sure to fully shield the pto and use an overrunning slip clutch when trying this.”

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tim Prestin, Prestin Farms, Box 697, Wenona, Ill. 61377.

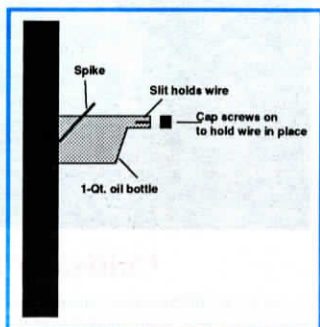
Fence Insulators Made From 1-Quart Oil “Cans”

“I got the idea one day when I ran out of insulators and came back to the shop to see what I could use in a pinch. There was a case of empty plastic oil containers and I decided to experiment with them,” reports Greg Krause who says plastic 1-quart containers worked so well he now uses them instead of conventional insulators.

He takes the cap off the container and uses a knife to make a slit down through the neck that runs a little deeper than the cap. Then he inserts the wire in the slit and puts the cap back on to hold it in place. He says the slit shouldn't be too deep or the threads will collapse and the cap will come off. The slit is made so the widest part of the oil bottle will fit up and down lengthwise with the post to provide maximum support to the wire.

He nails the oil containers to the post with long spikes, driving them diagonally down through the top side of the container.

“Some of my oil bottle insulators have been up 5 years now with no problems.



They hold every bit as well as commercial insulators yet cost almost nothing,” says Krause, noting that he also uses oil bottles to run power to fences by spiking the bottles sideways to the top of posts.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Greg Krause, Rt. 1, Box 97, Engadine, Mich. 49827 (ph 906 586-9707).

“Best Ideas”



Cheap & Easy Way To Load Big Bales

“It's an inexpensive way to load big bales onto an 8-ft. trailer. No need for a tractor loader or any powered equipment. All you need is a hand-cranked winch,” says Ed Hammond, Pittsburg, Tex.

He made a bale hook out of reinforcing rod that “bites” into the bale when the winch cable is tightened. Here's how it works:

Hammond backs the trailer up against a bale lying in the field and pulls the winch cable out over the bale. He then pushes the hay hook into the back side of the bale at a

point about 2 ft. above ground level. The points of the hook, which go into the hay about 6 in., must be sharp to penetrate.

When he cranks up the winch, the bale rolls up onto the trailer. Once loaded, he wraps a chain around the sides of the bale to keep it from rolling off.

“It takes only about 6 to 8 min. to load a bale for transport,” says Hammond.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ed Hammond, Rt. 4, Box 216, Pittsburg, Tex. 75686.

Cows Protect Sheep From Coyotes

You've probably heard about sheep farmers who put donkeys, llamas, emus, or exotic guard dogs out on pasture with sheep to protect them from coyotes. Now USDA researchers say the best solution to coyote problems may be the simplest - just put

sheep together with cattle on pasture.

In a 3-year study on a ranch in New Mexico, where sheep flock losses had been as high as 50 percent, casualties were reduced to zero by putting cattle together with sheep.

Range scientist Dean Anderson at the Jornada Experimental Range near Las Cruces, says training sheep to bond with cows was inexpensive, especially when compared with the costs of fencing or maintaining other non-revenue-producing guard animals. To train sheep and cattle to graze together, the researchers started by penning seven young sheep and three calves together for a bonding period. Then more sheep and cattle were gradually added. Anderson says once on pasture, the cattle become fierce protectors of the sheep in their herds.

