Hydraulics Make Loading Gooseneck Trailer Easy

Gooseneck trailers are handy, but they work even better if you add hydraulics to the hitch. Doing so let Mark Lockhart throw away his drive-on ramps and makes hooking up and unhooking a matter of seconds.

"I'm retired and buy and sell cars and scrap metal. I realized how much handier it would be to be able to tip the trailer end and winch stuff on," explains Lockhart. "The gooseneck was adjustable, so when I picked up a hydraulic pump for scrap, all I needed was a cylinder."

To make it even easier, the 12-volt battery, pump and 7-gal. reservoir came in a self-contained package. Lockhart simply mounted it on the gooseneck. The previous owner had stripped away the electronic controls, so Lockhart installed switches and valves. He also hooked up the trailer-mounted winch to run off the battery.

"It was like a unit you find on a small log splitter," he explains. "I set it up so the battery automatically recharges when the trailer lights are on as I drive."

Attaching the hydraulics was the trickiest part of the job, and Lockhart says even that was simple enough. He went with only a 2-in. cylinder, as he didn't need that much lifting power. The first step was to lengthen the sliding internal tube of the gooseneck so he could extend it a full 24 in. He then welded lugs for attaching the hydraulic cylinder on the gooseneck and one on the internal tube.

"I used heavy steel, about 1-in. plate for the lugs, and welded them solid so it could handle the cylinder," he says. "I hate standing around, especially when it's cold. The 2-in. cylinder is small enough it raises fully in about 20 seconds, yet it has lifted as much as 10,000 lbs. of steel with no problem."

Mark Lockhart added hydraulics to the hitch on his gooseneck trailer, allowing him to easily tip up the trailer's front end and winch stuff on.

Lockhart says the cylinder also comes in handy when unhooking the gooseneck. He simply raises the trailer a few inches and sets a block under the trailer. He then releases the gooseneck, sucks it up with the hydraulic cylinder and drives away.

"It's great to not have to mess with cranking the jack," says Lockhart. "I only have a couple hundred bucks in it, as I traded for most of the parts."

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Dale Verbeek's home-built cherry picker mounts on a 2-wheeled trailer and is equipped with three hydraulic cylinders, all operated by a 1 hp electric motor.

Tractor-Pulled "Cherry Picker"

"I built it after reading a story in FARM SHOW. It's a handy piece of equipment and was fun to build," says Dale Verbeek, Red Deer, Alberta, about his home-built, trailer-mounted "cherry picker".

"I use my Deere 790 tractor to move it around. It'll lift me up to 21 ft. in the air," says Verbeek.

The cherry picker mounts on a 12-ft. long, 2-wheeled trailer and is equipped with three hydraulic cylinders, all of them operated by a 1 hp electric motor that can be plugged into any 110-volt, 15-amp household outlet using a 100-ft. extension cord. The largest cylinder raises and lowers the main boom. A second cylinder is used to extend the basket out 4 ft. The third cylinder is located under the trailer and is hooked up to a linkage system, allowing the boom to be rotated up to 45 degrees to the left or right of center. By adjusting the linkage, Verbeek can rotate the boom even farther to the left or right.

The cherry picker can be controlled from the ground as well as from the basket via separate controls. One control lever is used to raise or lower the boom, one to rotate the boom left or right, and one to extend the basket.

A pair of gauges beside the bottom control levers show the inlet and outlet pressure on the cylinders.

The basket measures 3 by 2 ft. and is self-leveling. Four outriggers can be extended 8 ft. to stabilize the unit.

"I used it a lot last summer to paint my 2-story house and to work on the house's eaves troughs. Once I built it, I found it's useful for doing an amazing number of different jobs," says Verbeek. "The 21-ft. lift height is enough that I can step out of the basket directly onto my house's roof. It works great for replacing windows, changing yard lights, trimming tree branches, and so forth.

Boom raises basket up to 21 ft. A hydraulic cylinder can be used to extend basket out another 4 ft. "The 21-ft. lift height is enough that I can step out of the basket directly onto my house's roof," says Verbeek.

"It took about a year to build working off and on as time permitted.

"I plan to add hydraulic motors on the wheels that could be used to maneuver the unit around the yard at low speed, without the need for a tractor. That would make it easier to maneuver into tight spots."

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Willard Dittmer retrofitted his Deere 4230 with rear pto and throttle control.

Rear Controls Added To Deere 4230

Lots of newer tractors are built with rear fender control of pto's for safety and convenience. So Willard Dittmer decided to retrofit his older Deere 4230 with rear pto control and also throttle control.

"A cab tractor is a bit unhandy for chore work, such as grinding feed and filling feeders," notes Dittmer. "The rear controls really help out."

Dittmer welded a 5-in. strap iron arm to the pto clutch inside the cab. He then mounted a lever on the lower left rear of the cab. A 3/8-in. rod connects the two.

"For the throttle, I bolted a second 5-in. strap iron to the speed control arm at the rear of the right battery box," says Dittmer. "A 3/8-in. rod runs from it to a second lever attached to the right rear of the cab."

With the existing rear controls for remote hydraulics and 3-pt. hitch, he now has control of all major functions other than movement from the rear end.

One other change he made was to weld a U-shaped clip between the two hydraulic cylinder hooks mounted on back of the cab. The clip holds the center link in stored position.

"I just used some strap iron; it doesn't have to be spring steel," he says. "It works much better than the factory-installed transport hook."

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Some of the best new ideas we hear about are "made it myself" inventions born in farmers' workshops. If you've got a new idea or favorite gadget you're proud of, we'd like to hear about it. Send along a photo or two, and a description of what it is and how it works. Is it being manufactured commercially? If so where can interested farmers buy it? Are you looking for manufacturers, dealers or distributors? Send to FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 or call toll-free 800 834-9665. Or you can submit an idea at our website at www.farmshow.com.

Mark Newhall, Editor

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