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Rolling Cart Spreads Big Bales On Long Feeder

An 8-ft. round bale feeder wasn't big enough when Frank Thompson wanted to stretch one large bale to feed 40 calving heifers. So he built a 32-ft. long feed bunk with an unrolling cart on top that makes it easy to spread out a big bale.

"The cart was made with axles from an old grain drill. Wheel rims roll on the two 32-ft. pipes at the top of the feeder," says the Springer, New Mexico farmer.

Thompson welded V-shaped brackets out of 1 1/2-in. rod through the center of the bale to support a 2-in. rod through the center of the bale. Thompson's bales have soft centers so the rod goes in easily.

Thompson lifts a bale up onto the cart with

a loader with a fork and grappling hook, dropping the rod onto the V-brackets.

He manually rolls the cart along the feeder and peels hay off the bale with a bent pitchfork.

"Solid core bales spin like a top," Thompson says. They can roll too fast and unroll hay in one place, so they require a little more care.

The cart rolls so easily that it can blow right off with a wind, so Thompson added short upright pipes at each end of the top rails. He

also slips a U-shaped piece of metal on a rail to stop the cart where he wants to stop spreading hay.

He's used the feeder to handle 1,600-lb., 6-ft. dia. bales for about five years and it has held up well.

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Ragweed Cutter Clears Fields Fast

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

"Giant ragweed is no joke when it takes over a field. This summer the 6 to 8-ft. weed took over a good part of an 8-acre field I planted to trees last fall. Overseeding with oats had helped with most of the weeds, but not the ragweed.

"The tree-tolerant herbicide the state for-ester recommended runs about \$500/gal. That assumed I could find someone who had it and would apply it.

"Always looking for another way to use my Honda four-wheeler, I recalled knocking over trash trees the winter before with its mounted loader. After talking it over with Sheldon Kinneberg at Preston Iron Works, we came up with a simple cutterbar.

"He overlapped an 8-ft. length of 1 1/4-in. sq. steel tubing with a length of 2-in. wide, 1/4-in. steel strap, spot-welding it in place. I centered it on my ATV's 44-in. wide loader bucket and drilled two holes through the cutterbar and the bucket's reinforced cutting edge. I bolted the bar in place, locking it down tight so it wouldn't wear on the holes.

"Once in the field, the bar proved itself about 60 percent effective. When I hit the giant ragweed at speeds of 15 to 20 mph, the bar took them out. However, as often as not, it pulled them out of the ground and they piled up on the loader bar. After many trips to the edge of the field to unload, I headed back to the shop to grind a cutting edge on the steel strap.

"That change made all the difference. Though I still pulled the occasional ragweed out of the ground, most were snapped off about 12 to 15 inches above the ground. That left their stubble well above the 5 to 6-in. tree seedlings that had emerged this spring.

"The \$30 for the steel and couple gallons of gas were a steal compared to what it would have cost for an herbicide application."

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Last summer Jim Ruen used his Honda 4-wheeler to cut down giant ragweed in a field, using a simple homemade cutterbar.



Cutterbar consists of an 8-ft. length of 1 1/4-in. sq. steel tubing with a length of 2-in. wide, 1/4-in. steel strap ground down to a cutting edge.