

Michigan dogsled builder Clyde Risdon makes dogsleds for owners of one or two farm dogs.



Dog Sleds Designed For The Back Forty

If you live in snow country and you've got a couple of strong dogs, you might like these "around the farm" dogsleds.

Clyde Risdon, owner of Risdon Rigs, says you don't need a team of Huskys or expensive equipment to travel on snow. He sells dogsleds to owners with just one or two German shepherds, golden retrievers and even smaller breeds.

The Michigan dogsled builder has been producing quality, flexible sleds for the past 30 years. Harris Dunlap, one of the first racers to make a living at the sport used a Risdon Rig, and Risdon focused on building high-end sleds for serious dogsled racers.

A few years ago, Risdon started building inexpensive sleds for people who want to run them just for fun. "People see sled dog racing on TV and want to try it," Risdon explains.

Judy Latchaw lives on a St. John's, Mich., farm and understands the attraction. She got a sled after having her Golden Retriever pull her on cross-country skis.

"I always thought it would be fun to do," she says. She admits her first attempts to hook up the harness and train her dog would have made a funny video. It took a while to teach her dog to pull.

Risdon's sleds are flexible with light runners and loosely lashed baskets to maneuver easily around corners. He makes many of his sleds out of white ash harvested in Northern Michigan. Handles are made of durable UHMW (Ultra High Molecular Weight) black plastic. Runners on the least expensive models have plastic screwed to the runner. Higher end models have quick-change runners with replaceable plastic slides in aluminum rails screwed to the wood runners.

Entry-level sleds start at \$400 and another \$60 to \$70 covers the cost for harnesses and rigging for a pair of dogs.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Clyde Risdon, Risdon Rigs, P.O. Box 127, Laingsburg, Mich. 48848 (ph 517 651-6960; www.risdonrigs.com).

Handle clamps onto soil probe, allowing Stoller to take a sample and drop it into a bucket on front rack without ever getting off ATV.



His Farm Tools Help The Physically Challenged

Ned Stoller's knees bothered him after repeatedly climbing on and off his 4-wheeler taking soil samples. Fortunately, the agricultural engineer is in the business of researching and building equipment designed to give the human body a break. He designed a handle that clamps on his soil probe that allows him to sit on his ATV, take a sample and drop it in a bucket on the front rack.

"I've used it for five years and sampled 50,000 acres with it," Stoller says. "It has a long handle to hang on to it like a spear and you jab it in the ground with both hands. There's a step on it, so I can stomp on it if it's really hard soil. It's got a bicycle handle on top to help jerk it back out."

The step is adjustable and doubles as a depth gauge. Set it at the depth you want to take soil samples.

Stoller makes and sells the Sampling Probe Handle for \$85 from Lowell, Mich.,

through his business, Foresight Services, LLC. He also makes the StaFast Quick Hitch that allows tractor operators to hook up wagons without getting out of their seat.

One new project is a simple platform that makes it easier to get into a skid loader. It's made of grain bin stairs, expanded steel decking and angle iron reinforcement. Angle iron rails on the underside rest on the skid loader blade for solid footing and the whole platform can be lifted and moved with the skid loader.

The platform is helpful for farmers with arthritis, joint replacements and other disabilities. Stoller doesn't make them, but tells people how they can build them in their own shops for about \$400.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Foresight Services, LLC, 12152 Cascade Rd., Lowell, Mich. 49331 (616 897-0479; www.farneasier.com).



Kingsway composters range in size from 300 to 20,000 gal. The 1,000-gal. model shown above is the company's smallest continuous flow model.

Continuous Flow Composters Turn Manure Into Money

Whether you have one cow or 100, Kingsway Mfg. makes a continuous flow composter that can process daily manure production into a more easily stored or even a saleable commodity.

Kingsway composters range in size from 300 to 20,000 gal. at prices of \$1,000 to \$23,000.

"The 1,000-gal. unit is my smallest continuous flow composter," says King. "I've built batch units as small as 250 gal., but they serve a very limited need."

King recommends his 1,000-gal. unit, priced at \$2,400, for hobby farmers with a single cow or two to three horses. It's 6 ft. long and 4 ft. in dia.

All continuous flow units automatically cycle the manure from one end of the barrel to the other over a 3 to 6-day process, depending

on the amount and make-up of material. Fresh manure is added at one end, while composted material unloads out the other.

Turning is accomplished mechanically or with a hydraulic drive. The number and timing of rotations can be controlled manually or automated with a timer. Most units are rotated 4 to 6 times a day.

"Raw waste loses all offensive odor within 24 hours of startup," notes King.

Smaller (under 1,000-gal.) batch units are equally efficient at turning manure or kitchen waste into compost. Instead of openings at either end, they have a door along the barrel's length for loading and unloading. A small electric motor provides turning power.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kingsway Mfg., 192 West Millport Rd., Lititz, Penn. 17543 (ph 717 626-5809).



Simple platform (left) makes it easier to climb into a skid loader. Quick hitch (right) allows operator to hook up wagons without getting off tractor.



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

FARM SHOW

"Made It Myself"