Rick Mabeus saves money by buying used grain bins. He jacks them up and hauls them home on a flat-frame trailer.

Used Grain Bins Bring Huge Savings

"I wanted to add more grain storage, but I did not want to spend the money for new bins," says Rick Mabeus,, Winfield, Iowa. "I started asking around and found there were several grain bins available on neighboring farms that were not in use anymore. I bought them to move back to my place."

Unused bins can be found almost everywhere in the US. Once you find one near your location you simply break it down to as many parts as you can for transport. A tractor and trailer can haul even the largest bins a good distance. "Some will have more accessories than others. You can use what you want and sell the other parts," says Mabeus.

"Money can be saved in many ways by recycling used bins. I don't waste any more time waiting in a commercial elevator line or pay for storage," says Mabeus. "Just the aeration floor alone on a 30-ft. bin would cost you $2,000. I got my whole 36 footer for around $500."

If you're willing to do the work yourself, you'll save huge amounts of money," he says. The bins are simply jacked up and hauled off on a trailer. "So far I've bought and moved 24-ft., 36-ft. and 30-ft grain bins for a total cost of about $2,000. I probably saved over $5,000 on equipment costs alone."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rick Mabeus, 22419 60th St., Winfield, Iowa (ph 319 257-6764).

Marshall Litchfield used a Kinze grain auger to make a big "earth auger" that digs 18-in. dia. holes as deep as 9 ft. Auger flighting was doubled up on shaft.

Grain Auger Digger Makes Holes 9 Ft. Deep

Marshall Litchfield used a Kinze grain auger to make a big "earth auger" that digs 18-in. dia. holes as deep as 9 ft. It mounts on his skid steer loader.

Litchfield needed the big auger to dig holes for some street light poles he bought from a nearby town. He wanted to put a row of them along his driveway.

He cut the 16-in. Kinze auger down to 5 ft. long and added another piece of flighting, 180 degrees from the original flighting. Then he welded a 1-in. strip of metal along the edges of the double flighting to make the diameter 18 in.

He mounted the gearbox off a Danuser post hole digger on a bracket that attaches to the skid steer's frame. The gearbox is driven by a hydraulic motor that's hooked up to the same hydraulic hoses on the skid loader that normally are used to tilt the bucket. He removed the original Kinze auger shaft and replaced it with a 2-in. sq. shaft that's long enough for the auger to dig 9 ft. deep at the loader's highest lift point. The flighting is secured by a 1/2-in. bolt.

"It wasn't the quickest way in the world to come up with an auger. But it worked flawlessly," says Litchfield. "There are farm post hole diggers available with an 18-in. dia. auger, but most of them dig only about 6 ft. deep. The only other alternative would have been to rent an auger, or find an old utility truck-mounted auger.

"The street light poles were originally designed to set on a concrete pedestal and, with the lamp mounted on top, were 32 ft. high which would have been way too high for my needs. By dropping the poles 9 ft. deep in the ground the lamps are now only about 21 ft. high.

"My skid loader is operated by foot controls, with one pedal used to raise and lower the boom and the other to move the machine forward or backward. Once I dig as deep as I can without stalling out I just lift the auger out of the hole, drive forward to shake the dirt out, then back up and let the auger down into the hole again."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Marshall Litchfield, 15495 N 70 Road, Macomb, Ill. 61455 (ph 309 254-3481).

"Riderlight" consists of a wireless light strip that attaches to back of motorcycle helmet. It's powered by a replaceable lithium battery.

Turn Your Helmet Into A Brake Light

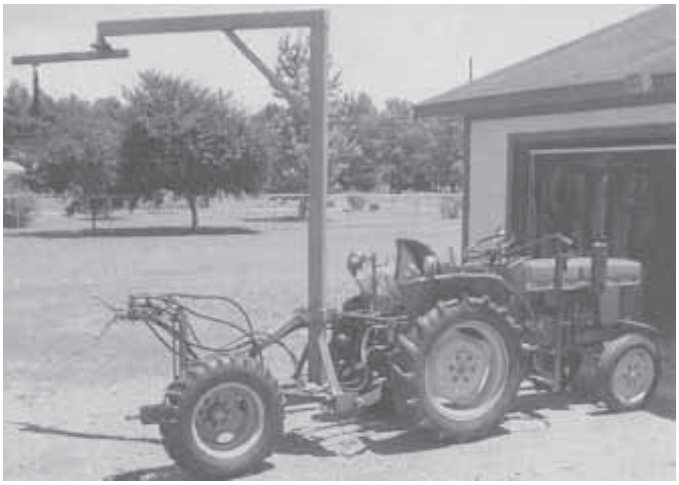
Over 3,000 motorcyclists are killed every year in America, many of them due to poor visibility. A new wireless light strip that attaches to the back of a helmet might help. It lights up when you brake.

A replacement "transmitter" bulb takes the place of the regular brake light in the bike. When you brake, it sends a signal to the light.

The "Riderlight" attaches with a strip of waterproof adhesive tape and is powered by a replacement lithium battery. It has six LED's and an emergency switch.

The transmitter bulb fits any motorcycle or ATV. Sells for $99.95. Can also be attached to the back of the seat.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Technoscout, 1998 Ruffin Mill Rd., Colonial Heights, Va. 23834 (ph 800 399-7858; website: www.riderlight.net).



Remote-operated rig is used to trim Christmas trees. Steering is controlled by pivoting the whole control unit, which is connected to the steering linkage.

Walk-Behind Tree Trimmer

Joe Shilling operates a Christmas Tree farm in Jacksonville, Ark. Twice a year he must trim every tree in order for it to maintain optimum shape. Some tree farms use handheld trimmers, but on large-scale farms, gas powered clippers must be used. "But those clippers are heavy and can only be used by one person for a few hours at a time," says Shilling, who rigged up a walk-behind tractor with a swinging boom to support the trimmer.

The tractor is a Deere 750, which has a narrow 3.7-ft. wheelbase, a perfect fit for running between rows. The boom and mast are made from 1/4-in. thick walled steel beams. The boom extends over 5 ft. out from the mast, which allows plenty of room for trimming the far side of trees. A heavy spring hangs from the end of the boom and cuts down on the vertical movement of the trimmer.

The tractor control unit hangs off the end of the boom trailer. Forward and reverse are controlled by one lever while another lever tilts the mast in order to keep the trimmer hanging completely vertical. The steering is controlled by pivoting the whole control unit which is connected to the steering linkage. At top speed the tractor will go 2 mph. The boom trailer has only one wheel, which allows for easier tilting and maneuverability.

The boom does not allow for faster trimming of trees, but it does allow for easier work and longer hours. David Burner is a agronomist from USDA Agricultural Resource Service, "I think the rig may prove useful for any field operation where heavy, hand-held equipment or tools could be supported by a boom to reduce worker fatigue and increase safety and efficiency. Examples would be mechanical weeding, chemical spraying and harvesting."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, David Burner, 6883 South State Highway 23, Booneville, Ark. 72920 (ph 479 675-3834; fax 479 675-2940; email: dburner@spa.ars.usda.gov) or Joe Schilling, P.O. Box 5256, Jacksonville, Ark. 72076.