

## World's Longest Level

You can take advantage of the fact that water finds its own level in an open hose by adding a length of clear plastic tubing to either end of a garden hose using garden hose couplings.

Robert Tupper, Canton, S. Dak. needed to establish a slope away from his house. He added 18-in. of clear plastic tubing to each end of a hose. He taped one plastic end to a 4-ft. stake in the ground and taped another 4-ft. stake, as well as a yardstick, to the other plastic end.

To use the device, he first put the two tubes side by side and marked the water level on the yard stick of his "movable" end. By standing the movable stake at various places in the yard, and by checking the reading, he knew how much dirt he had to move to get the slope he wanted. As the ground level dropped, the water level in the tube came up.



Level consists of clear plastic tubing, garden hose, a yardstick and two 4-ft. long stakes.

## Plow-Plant Method Saves Time, Money And Moisture For Wisconsin Farmer

"Our rows are a little more crooked than our neighbors but we don't care," says Tony Veriha, Porterfield, Wis., who saves time, money and moisture with his "plow-plant" method of raising corn.

Tony explains that he and his sons, Bob and Jim, plant their corn crop directly into plowed ground with their Deere Max-Emerge planter 24 to 48 hrs. after plowing without any disking or other tillage in between.

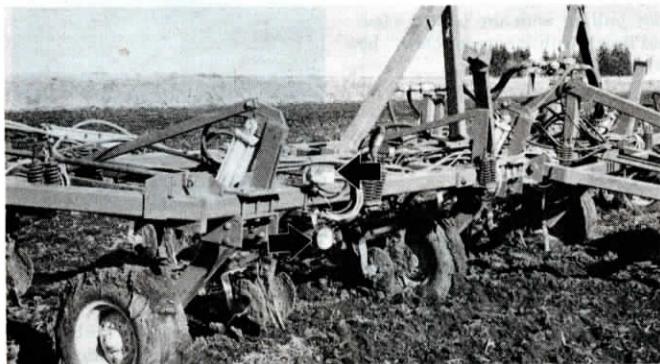
"It saves time because we eliminate the need for secondary tillage, especially important in the spring when there's never enough time. It also saves fuel by cutting down trips through the field, and because there's less runoff in the roughest fields, it helps conserve moisture," says Veriha.

Veriha has been plow-planting for 40 years. Yields, he says, are as good or better than his neighbors. "We use the money we save on fuel to apply

extra fertilizer," he told FARM SHOW.

Veriha says rows get crooked because it's harder to follow the marker on plowed ground and because the planter shifts more on rough-plowed ground when on hills. The planter also tends to skip more than normal so, to compensate, he plants about 2,000 more plants per acre than normal. "You bounce a little bit but the advantages more than make up for it," he notes, adding that the biggest disadvantage is that it's harder to see rocks in the plowed fields. He advises against plow-planting in heavy, low-land soils.

The only secondary tillage he does before planting is to run a disc over dead furrows and along headlands. Once the crop is up, he cultivates once, which helps level the ground between rows. Last year Veriha had yields as high as 165 bu. on some fields.



Lights let you see worked ground after dark to avoid "skips".

## Add-On Implement Lights

William Erpelding and sons, Algona, Iowa, added auxiliary lights to their fertilizer applicator. The lights are aimed to cover the area in front and to the side of the machine so they can see the worked ground after dark and

avoid "skips".

The lights were add-on units available at implement dealers. They're wired to a switch in the cab. They say the idea would work on any tillage implement.

## Holes Drilled In Dipstick Make It Easier To Read

Curtis Wold, Starbuck, Manitoba, drills holes in engine and transmission dipsticks to make oil levels easier to read. In Grainews Magazine, Wold reports that he drills two 1/16-in. holes in the dipstick — one at the "full" mark and the second just above

the "add oil" mark. By looking at which hole has oil in it, he can easily tell the oil level.

Since dipsticks are made of high-strength steel, Wold advises center-punching the dipstick before drilling.

## Inner Tube Helps Thaw Water Tank

"It's a new idea farmers have developed to keep water available in water tanks all winter," says Bob Wood, Adrian, Texas. He says the idea is to partially fill tractor inner tubes with water and float them in water tanks.

"The black tubes absorb warmth

from the sun. Because they remain half-submerged in the water, they melt the ice around them and when cattle nudge them, they sink and fresh water comes up around them. It makes for an inexpensive water thermostat," says Wood. He uses the idea in water tanks 12 to 15 ft. across.

## Dairy Farmer Succeeds With "Backward" Cows

"Backward" bovines have been taking Glenn and Mary Van Handl's dairy herd forward. At auctions, instead of buying a cow that's soon to freshen or is already adding to the bulk tank, the Hortonville dairyman has been purchasing what he calls "backward" cows.

"Generally, in your farm auctions you'll find a cow that is near the end of her lactation or is dry," Glenn explains. "She'll be a cheaper animal because most people want instant milk. If the other cows are going for \$800, maybe you can get her for \$600."

A "normal" cow, purchased at freshening, has all sorts of stress heaped upon her — being hauled to another farm, calving, and becoming acclimated to new surroundings, Glenn points out. By the time she finally gets settled in, he notes, "It seems like you lose a whole lactation."

In many cases the farmer winds up keeping her a year and devoting a year's worth of feed to her — only to eventually discover that he doesn't want to keep her.

"On the other hand," compares Glenn, "if I keep a cow (such as a 'backward' cow) three months and she doesn't cut the mustard . . ." out she goes.

A dairyman who pays a grandiose sum for a cow — say \$1,000 or more — is reluctant to ship her if she doesn't pan out. Because he has paid so much for her, maybe he keeps her longer than he should, continuing to throw good money after bad, Glenn reasons. "You're quicker to admit it (a mistake) with a 'backward' cow," he contends.

Like other motivated dairy-

men, Glenn and Mary are shooting for a 20,000-pound herd average from their 35 Holsteins, a couple of which are registered.

He feels that goal is not unrealistic, since they're at 18,078 pounds of milk, 705 of fat, 583 pounds of protein and a 3.9 fat test. To put those figures in perspective, one should note that Mary and Glenn have largely been relying on, as Glenn says, "cull cows, backward cows at farm auctions and bred heifers."

To bring those statistics into even sharper focus, it helps to point out that Glenn and Mary milked their first three cows less than four years ago — April of 1983. They vividly recall stirring the milk by hand that first night, simply because there wasn't enough of it to reach the bulk tank's agitator.

Glenn singles out one area which Mary and he greatly improved — basic feeding. "I don't think there are that many elite cows out there in the state of Wisconsin," contends Glenn. "You take your average cow and feed her right and she'll produce."

"I guess if I was going to pick out any points whatsoever, you've got to feed them right and balance the ration. We really got on a good program," says Glenn.

"We never hit 100 pounds (of milk a day from a cow) until we balanced the ration like he said we should. We didn't change feeds. Don't get me wrong," Glenn points out.

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