

How To Make A Cheap Square Bale Feeder

Karoo Oakey in South Africa recently came up with a hay-saving square bale feeder. It's both cheap and quick to build, and Oakey shared it, complete with step by step photos and instructions, at the website, www.instructables.com.

The feeder holds a single square bale on end and is made entirely out of scrap iron. Oakey says vehicle rims make an ideal base. The sides of the feeder consist of old "windpump rods," which are 39 in. long. He used four 3/5-in. dia. rods and eight 1/2-in. dia. rods, but says that thinner rods would also work. He spaced them 5.9 in. apart around the rim, after finding that any spacing greater than 6.3 in. allows the feed to start falling out too easily through the gaps.

Oakey initially spot-welded the rods onto the rim, just enough so that they were adjustable and not immobile.

He formed a support ring for the top of the feeder by placing the tip of a rod in a wheel rim's valve hole, holding the rim securely, and hammering the rod down while wrapping it around the rim, then cutting the bent tip off later.

"It works good to bend a rod around the rim since that was already the right size," he explains.

He points out that a support ring half-way down the feeder is also essential.

Spot welding the top and middle support rings require either the use of magnets to hold everything in place, or a second pair of hands. Once everything's lined up, he welds everything permanently.

The last step is to add stabilizing "feet" made from scrap pipe. The pipe sections have to be slightly notched to fit under the rim's lip.

"When filling the feeders with hay, I've found that it's better not to remove the baling twine because then the sheep don't pull huge chunks out. There's also much less pushing and shoving, since they all know the bale will be there longer," he says. "There's still a bit of a mess, but it's far better than just chucking the bale on the ground."

Karoo Oakey can be contacted by email through the Instructables website: <http://www.instructables.com/id/Bale-Feeders-for-stock-Cheap-Quick/>



Hay-saving feeder holds a single square bale on end and is made entirely out of scrap iron.



Oakey wraps a steel bar around rim. Stabilizing "feet" (below) are made from scrap pipe.



Big Car Tires Give Riding Mower A Lift

Tim Grefsrud, Siren, Wis., wanted a riding mower that would cut tall grass without bogging down and plugging up at the chute, and he didn't want to spend the money for a new model. So he modified his 15-year-old MTD 42-in. riding mower by adding big 14-in. car wheels on back, which raised the mower 3 in.

"I plant some small fields with clover for deer, and I only want to mow them once or twice a year. My modified mower clears gopher mounds and doesn't get hung up on uneven ground," says Grefsrud. "The deck sets 5 1/2 in. off the ground when not in use."

The original 20 by 8.00-8 mower tires were replaced with P185/75R14 tires.

"The 14-in. wheel rims came off a Ford Mustang, but the tires were worn so I put different tires on the rims," says Grefsrud. "To make the car wheel rims fit the mower's wheel hubs, I had to make some modifications. I cut off a flange on each rim and then drilled 5 holes in a flat plate already on the mower wheel hub, and then I welded in 3/8-in. dia. bolts. I also made my own lug nuts to fit the wheels and the 3/8 in. threads."

To keep the deck level, he welded on a 3-in. extension to raise each of the mower's steering spindles. The mower deck had to be moved ahead 2 in. in order to clear the car tires, which meant the original drive belt had to be replaced with a shorter one. The seat and rear fenders also had to be raised 1 1/4 in., using aluminum spacers and longer bolts.

"The deck now cuts only as low as its original highest cutting position. I usually mow about 4 1/2 in. high," says Grefsrud. "Mowing higher keeps the deck from loading up and slowing the machine down, so the cut grass flies right out of the chute. I used the machine last fall to mow tall grass under some power lines and it never plugged up or even slowed down. It went right over gopher mounds without hitting them."

"I also made a few other modifications, which my wife thought were a little excessive for a lawn mower. One was the paint job. The mower originally was painted red, but I repainted it yellow and black. I also added the muffler off a Honda 750 motorcycle muffler, a foam padded steering wheel off a go-cart, and brass shift knobs on the gearshift levers."



Grefsrud modified his MTD 42-in. riding mower by adding big 14-in. car wheels on back. "It raises the mower 3 in. and lets me cut tall grass without bogging down," he says.

Grefsrud says he spent about \$25 for the tires and paint, and \$20 for the belt. "I already had most of the other materials," he says.

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Add-On Skids Keep Mower From "Castoring" Downhill

A pair of home-built skids keeps Robert Mork's walk-behind mower from sliding downhill as he cuts his lawn. The skids replace the mower's front-mount castor wheels.

"Our home sets on a rough, steep hill. The mower's castor wheels tend to turn downhill, which requires the operator to ride the uphill brake and also pull against the handlebars to compensate. The skids provide greater contact with the ground, which makes the mower more stable and greatly reduces the effort required to keep the mower tracking straight."

He used 3/4-in. dia. round bar and 1/4-in. thick by 2-in. wide flat plate to build the skids. A welded-on, 7/8-in. dia. shaft extends from the top of the flat plate and pins onto the arm that originally held the castor wheels. A 3/4-in. dia. pin welded on back of each skid fits into a metal tab welded to the mower's front deck guard, and keeps the skid locked

straight. The back end of each skid is curved to keep the mower from digging into the dirt when backing up.

"Now when I turn downhill, the mower has less tendency to 'run away' because the skids provide some drag," says Mork. "However, I always try to turn uphill to take advantage of the mower's rearward weight transfer, which takes the mower's weight off the skids. When turning on flat ground I have to put some down pressure on the handlebars so I can turn easier."

Mork also made a simple towbar that lets him pull the mower behind his golf cart. "It lets me tow the mower anywhere I need it on my 18-acre place and saves a lot of walking," says Mork. "Also, when it's hooked up to the golf cart the front part of the mower is raised which makes it easy to install either the castor wheels or skids."

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Skids replace walk-behind mower's front-mounted castor wheels, keeping mower from sliding downhill.