Dogs Stay Cozy In Hollowed-Out Bales

Hollowed out round hay bales are home sweet home for Taxi and Homer, two dogs who live near Demmitt, Alta., where temperatures can dip to 40 degrees below zero. The big bale dog homes also stay cool in the summer.

"I had a freezing dog and a neighbor that didn't pick up his hay," says Peter von Tiesenhausen, who came up with the idea for the hay doghouses about 10 years ago.

Hollowing out bales proves to be a bit tricky. He's used everything from a chainsaw to an electric knife. His best excavator is a tool he made by flattening rebar on one end and making a hook to cut and pull the hay. He makes ribs out of willows inside to hold the circular shape, jabbed bigger willows in the ground on the outside and tied them taut at the top to hold the bale's exterior shape. Bale wire "sewn" around the edge of the hole keeps the opening round.

He puts the bales under a tree for summer shade. "The door faces south, and so it's nice and cozy in winter," von Tiesenhausen says. "In the summer the sun is higher so it doesn't shine in the door."

Over the years, the interior has grown larger - big enough to hold two dogs - and von Tiesenhausen added a couple of gunny sacks filled with shavings as a bed/windbreak at the opening. He made a second house for his newest dog, Homer, last year and made a smaller hole. Use hay, Von Tiesenhausen advises, rather than straw, which breaks down faster.

There's only been one major incident with the hay bale house. One morning Taxi was on the porch barking frantically - a moose was eating the back of his house. A piece of plywood stopped the problem.

"This is one of the best ideas I've had," says von Tiesenhausen. "It'll probably last another couple of years, and then I can throw the hay on the garden."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Peter von Tiesenhausen, Demmitt, Alta., Canada.

Hollowed-out round bales make a cozy "hay doghouse" for Taxi and Homer. They live in Alberta where winter temperatures can dip to 40 degrees below zero.

Bale Truck Loads, Unloads Fast

Dan Rosman doesn't need a lot of extra labor when it comes to hauling big round bales. The Wilbur, Wash., farmer modified a 1991 Volvo FE 6 cab-over truck to load and carry 14, 5-ft. bales. Once loaded, he can zip down the road at 60 mph.

"I can load bales on-the-go, filling up in as little as 10 minutes," says Rosman. "I had been using 3 trucks and 2 tractors to load and stack bales. I looked at bale haulers designed to be pulled behind pickups or tractors, but I needed to go down the highway at highway speeds. I used this rig to put up about 700 tons of hay last summer and 150 tons of straw for my cowcalf operation. "

Rosman bought the truck used for $4,500 and estimates he has about $15,000 in the truck and loader, including labor. "I saved a lot of money because commercial bale-loading trucks sell for up to $150,000," he says. "I chose a cab-over truck with a really long frame because it has a really tight turning radius, and the long frame can haul a lot of bales.

"I designed it to haul 14, 4 by 5-ft. bales or 12, 5 by 5-ft. bales. My neighbor has used it to haul 6-ft. tall bales with no problems."

He tackled the project with help from his neighbor Mike, great nephew Josh, and hired man Lane. They removed the truck's bed, which was in bad shape, and built a new one. They strengthened the bed's frame by adding another frame onto it.

They made the lift arm out of various sizes of tubing supported by 1-in. steel plate. It mounts direct to the truck frame. The main bed is made out of rectangular tubing.

The pickup arm picks up the bale, which rolls across the bed. The second bale pushes the first bale against a stop on the passenger side. Once the second bale is loaded in place, a pusher plate behind the cab moves the bales down the bed, making room for the next two bales.

Once the bed is full, Rosman hauls the bales out of the field to a storage location and raises the truck's hoist. He then activates the pusher plate to push the load of bales off the bed. The pusher plate pushes the truck forward as the bales are pushed off, leaving the bales in rows two wide.

"Everything is run off the transmission pto and is controlled by a series of solenoid valves activated from the cab with electrical switches," says Rosman.

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Modified 1991 Volvo cab-over truck can load and carry 14, 5-ft. bales. "I can load bales on-the-go, filling up in as little as 10 minutes," says inventor Dan Rosman.

Lift arm mounts directly to truck frame and is made out of various sizes of tubing supported by 1-in. steel plate.

Lister Engine Fitted With Cruise Control

Calvin Carroll loves his Lister engine-powered generator, but he loves it more since he put cruise control on it. Initially the 16 hp Lister had plenty of power for the 8 kW generator…until the generator came under load.

"When an extra load was added, the Lister, with its heavy flywheels, was slow to recover rpm's," says Carroll. "After much trial and error, I added a cruise control that works great."

Carroll bought the Lister engine after dealing with occasional power outages lasting up to three days. He had read about the "cloned" Lister engines in FARM SHOW. Eventually he located Stoltzfus Enterprise in Pennsylvania and bought the single cylinder diesel and the generator to go with it.

Carroll first bolted the units to a slab of concrete 4 by 5 ft. by 18 in. deep. He then installed new pulleys and heavy-duty belts to gear the engine's 650 rpm's up to the 1850 needed by the generator. A glass pack muffler reduced the moderate noise of the engine and generator.

The next change was to add the cruise control. Rather than drill holes to install a vacuum sensor cruise control system, Carroll opted for a magnetic sensor control from Specmo Enterprises. Not only was it simpler, but it also cost less than 1/4 the estimate he received for a vacuum system.

"I had to attach magnets to either side of the flywheel and an electric solenoid to sense them," says Carroll. "When the flywheel starts to slow down, the cruise control adjusts the throttle to maintain rpm's."

Carroll installed a solar panel and a battery to power the electric solenoid. The Lister engine was $1,600 and the generator an additional $600. The cruise control added $250 to the cost. It's been a good deal for Carroll, especially since most of his fuel is free.

"I have a son-in-law whose family is in the restaurant business, and I get all the used vegetable oil I want from them," says Carroll. "I let it set in the sun for a few days to settle out, then I filter it through a couple of layers of cloth a few times. It smells like someone is cooking when it burns."

Carroll uses the vegetable oil in a 50-50 mix with diesel fuel in the winter. The rest of the year, he burns it straight.

"I can run the whole house, including electric heat in the winter and air conditioning in the summer, for a gallon of fuel over 4 to 6 hours," he says. "It's green economically and environmentally, and I like that both ways, especially the first."

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Equipment source:

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Specmo Enterprises, Inc., G3189 Dort Hwy., Flint, Mich. 48529 (ph 810 744-2940; info@specmo.com; www.specmo.com).

With add-on "cruise control", Lister engine-powered generator maintains steady power even when the generator (shown in the foreground) is under load.