



Truck-mounted hoof trimming chute picks the cow up and lays her over in one smooth, fast motion.



Photo shows rear view of the same truck with chute's gate open.

Truck-Mounted Hoof Trimming Chute

Mark Larson says the key to hoof trimming is a relaxed cow, and the key to that is a Riley Built trimming chute. Larson has been using Riley Built chutes since he quit dairying and started trimming cows more than 15 years ago. He likes them so much that he now has a part interest in the company.

"Bill Riley trained me, and I liked the chute he was using," recalls Larson. "I hadn't shopped around, but since then I've seen other lay-over chutes, and they don't compare."

For Larson, everything is about cow comfort. He notes that other lay-over chutes pivot, while the Riley Built chute picks the cow up and lays her over in one smooth, fast motion.

"One minute the cow is standing up, and the next she is laying on her side with her legs stretched out straight," says Larson. "They fall naturally into a trimming position. I've had people ask me how much tranquilizer I use to get cows to relax. When you finish, the chute sets her back down on all four feet."

For years, Riley perfected his chute for

his own use, building a new and slightly improved model every two years. Among the improvements is a cushion for the cow's right shoulder. It helps to cradle the cow.

"What you think of in the shop often doesn't work in the field, but seeing it work in the field lets you see how to modify it to make it better," says Riley. "It took me 21 years to get it right, trying to make it easier on the animal and myself."

After years of having other trimmers like Larson asking him for his old chutes, Riley started manufacturing them. When he took his design to a patent attorney, he ended up with 17 separate patents for the innovations in the chute.

Riley Built now makes multiple models. One is for permanent installation. Two are trailer-mounted units, and one is a truck-mounted unit. All models include independent hydraulic power supply systems. While other lay-over chutes can be mounted on trucks, Riley's are unique. He sells the chute on a 1-ton, single axle, rear wheel drive Ford

F-350 pickup that he special orders from dealers and resells at his cost with his chute installed. Larson says the particular design is important due to the severe stress the chute can place on the frame.

"It has the chassis strength of an F-450 dually with 9 leaf springs instead of 5," explains Riley. "Because of the way I buy them, I can sell them cheaper than an individual can buy them. It's a good deal for me because I sell a chute, a good deal for my customer because he gets a truck at cost and a good deal for the Ford dealer because he moves a truck. A good deal should be good for everyone."

Riley emphasizes that he doesn't make the chutes himself. "I'm not a welder," he says. "Hiring good people who know what they're doing is the trick."

Larson's first chute was truck-mounted, and he has stayed with the design. It includes protective fence that hangs on the truck to protect it from cows. It serves as one side of an alley from existing facilities to move cattle to and through the chute.

"The design is easy to clean and the only lubrication needed is at a couple of pivot points," says Larson.

The truck-mounted trimming chute price varies slightly by region of the country, due to Ford Company pricing policies. However, Riley notes that most are around \$60,000. The company still offers the training in hoof trimming that got Larson started. With the purchase of equipment, the price of being trained drops \$1,000 from the full \$2,500 price. Riley himself has trained more than 400 people. Today he has several other trainers, including Larson, who teach the course.

"We offer one-on-one training in the field, not a classroom school," emphasizes Larson. "When I started, Bill's was the only one I found that was hands-on. I wanted someone who was doing the work."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Riley Built, Inc., 7802 Genoa Ave., Lubbock, Texas 79424 (ph 806 798-9684; www.rileybuilt.com).

Indianans Develop A Taste For Freshwater Shrimp

By C.F. Marley, Contributing Editor

The interest in shrimp farming on Midwest farms continues to grow. Keith Henderson and his wife, Katrina, open up their farm on Labor Day weekend to friends and family who pitch in for the shrimp harvest. It has turned into an annual tradition for many area folks.

With 5 ponds this year and each pond averaging 300 to 450 lbs. of shrimp, the Hendersons are hoping for a good harvest, despite this summer's extreme temperatures. "We were lucky to have a good week, so we ran fresh water into them for a couple of days as needed to raise the level and lower the temperature," Katrina Henderson explains.

This is the couple's fifth season raising shrimp. When Katrina quit teaching to do day care for her grandchildren, she and her husband decided to create a seasonal job for her.

They buy juvenile shrimp to place in the ponds around the first of June. Mortality rates are high so they stock about 10,000 in each pond. Feeding chores take Henderson about half an hour each day. She also monitors the pH, temperature and oxygen levels.

"The most iffy part is wondering if the shrimp are there," Henderson says. "They are such bottom feeders, you never know what you've got until you drain the pond."

Because her husband had the equipment to dig the ponds, it has been easier to keep the costs down. The Hendersons added ponds and a processing building over the years, paying as they went. With the infrastructure in place, this year should be the most profitable.

Over Labor Day weekend, the Hendersons begin the 5 to 7-hour job of draining the ponds to harvest the shrimp in collection chutes. Within just three months, the shrimp grow to yield 12 to a pound. Though they might grow bigger with a later harvest date, the Hendersons prefer not to risk an early frost that would kill the shrimp. Over Labor Day weekend, they sell most of the shrimp directly to people at the farm at \$12/lb. The rest is fried, boiled or made into shrimp gumbo and sold on-site at their farm.

The event becomes a party with artists, wine tasting and other vendors. People bring lawn chairs to watch the harvest.

"A lot of people, even regulars, can't believe that we do this in Indiana," Henderson says. The fresh water shrimp have a lobster texture, and people enjoy getting such an unusual food in Indiana. Many people allergic to marine shrimp can eat freshwater shrimp.

This year, the Hendersons purchased blue crab and planted them in a pond. Like the shrimp, they haven't been seen since. The Hendersons can only hope they are there at harvest.

Henderson enjoys the sideline business, which is seasonal and low maintenance to run. Sons-in-law live trap predators (turtles and frogs) out of the pond. The most important thing is to make sure aerators run constantly, she notes.

Apparently, more folks in Indiana have developed a taste for freshwater shrimp. There were just three farmers in Indiana when the Hendersons started. Now there are six.



The Hendersons open up their farm on Labor Day weekend to friends and family who pitch in for the shrimp harvest. In June they buy juvenile shrimp to place in ponds.

Visitor numbers at the Hendersons' harvest range from 500 to 1,200 over the three-day weekend.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Eddy-

Lynn Shrimp Farm, 446 S. Co. Rd. 900 E., Coatesville, Ind. 46121 (ph 765 386-7496; www.shrimpfarminginindiana.com).