



Gordon Fuller uses a big "sewing needle" to split big square bales in half and re-wrap them with nylon straps. "The smaller bales are easier to feed to my miniature horses," he says.

"Sewing Needle" Splits Big Square Bales In Half

Gordon Fuller and his wife wanted an easier way to feed big square bales to their miniature horses, so Gordon came up with a big "sewing needle" that lets him split the bales in half and re-wrap them with nylon straps.

"It's like pushing a sewing needle through cloth, only I'm pushing the needle through the bale. The eye of the needle holds the straps, which keep the half-size bales together," says the Barriere, B.C., farmer.

He used a 42-in. long, 1 1/4-in. wide, 1/4-in. thick steel bar to make the needle. He ground one end of the bar to a point, and welded a D-ring onto the other end that forms the eye of the needle and is used to pull the straps through.

He starts with the bale setting on its edge. He shoves the needle through the center of the bale about 2/3 of the way up off the ground, until the pointed end is all the way through on the far side of the bale and the eye can still be seen on the near side. He attaches 2 straps to the eye and then pulls the shaft all the way through the bale. Then he removes the straps from the eye and wraps each one around the bale, hooking the strap ends together and attaching a ratchet to the end of the strap to tighten it up.

Then he repeats the process, pushing the shaft through the bale and then wrapping straps around the other side of the bale. The final step is to cut the bale's original twine strings and pull them off.



The eye of the "needle" holds the straps which keep the half-size bales together.

"As soon as I start pulling the shaft through the bale it pulls nice and even," says Fuller. "I use 2 different colors of straps so they're easier to hook up."

"I came up with the idea because we use a loader tractor equipped with forks to feed miniature horses in 5 different locations, and we don't need much hay at each location. The bales we start with are 32 in. wide, 36 in. deep and 8 ft. long. They're not super big, but they weigh about 640 lbs. The half-size bales are small enough to fit through the doorway of an 8 by 8-ft. hay shed. I set the bales down on their end and then remove flakes from the top."

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Winch Tower Pulls Logs Out Of The Woods

Loggers who cut and drag trees out of wood lots will soon have a new way to get the job done. A European company, Tajfun, introduced its new Mobile Skyline in early 2014 in Europe, and it's expected to be on the market in the U.S. later in the year. The company currently sells its logging winches, digital wood measuring devices, and firewood processing products in 50 countries around the world.

The new skyline, powered by a 40 hp or larger tractor pto, is like bringing a ski lift to a logging operation, complete with cables and electronically operated winches. Tajfun's U.S. representative, Tamara Zalar, says the winch tower will be ideal for anyone who needs to move logs 200 to 300 yards from the deep woods to a staging location.

First the power unit with its 20-ft. tall cable tower is set up. Three anchor lines hold the cable tower secure. Then 3 haulback lines are

unrolled from the power unit and extended into the woods. The lines are anchored on a sturdy tree at least 16 in. in dia.

The retrieval device is a haulback line carriage that moves on the cables, operated electronically with a hand-held remote. "Dragging logs out of the woods can be a 2-person operation with this tower system," Zalar says. "One person is near the power unit, which uses a hydraulic motor to raise and lower the tower and operate the cable drums. The other person connects the winch line and carriage to the log."

Logs can be lifted and hauled or dragged on the ground. The carriage speed is adjustable, and it stops automatically if it's overloaded.

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Custom Farm Vehicles Built From Old Trucks

By Lorn Manthey, Contributing Editor

Chris Lindstrom was raised on a large Wisconsin dairy farm, but he wasn't a guy who gravitated to cows. "I was always tinkering with machinery as a teenager," Lindstrom says. "I started building custom manure trucks when our operation grew out of pull-type spreaders. We needed something that was big, tough and powerful. I built my first truck-mounted spreader onto an old cab-over garbage truck that had more than 300,000 miles on it. I replaced the garbage truck body with a big custom manure box and we were in business."

Lindstrom went on to build other custom rigs for his family operation, then started Maxville Truck & Repair in 2002. His family still runs a large dairy but Chris and his Maxville crew have done more than 100 bumper-to-bumper restorations on used cab-over garbage and cement trucks. They overhaul engines and transmissions, refurbish the cab, reinforce the frame and then mount silage boxes, grain boxes or TMR units on the extra-strong vehicles. He and his crew do the engine, power train and frame buildups and a local metal fabricator builds the custom boxes. "We produce whatever our livestock customers want in whatever price range they give us," says Chris.

Normally they rebuild and strengthen truck frames for added carrying capacity. When it comes to transmissions, they can install large hydrostatic pumps so the vehicles have infinite speed control for bunk-feeding, side-winding alongside choppers or applying liquid manure.

One of the hydros Lindstrom has installed produces 275 hp. When the truck isn't used for hauling it can spin a 540 rpm manure pump at 700 to 900 rpm's. In 2014 he's building a larger pump that should push 400 hp and be able to fill a 6,500 gal. liquid manure tanker in under 90 seconds. The



Chris Lindstrom converts old garbage and cement trucks into manure trucks. "We produce whatever our livestock customers want," he says.



powerful hydrostatic vehicles can replace high-horsepower tractors at a far lower purchase price. They're also less expensive to operate.

"Manure handling efficiency is all about moving gallons per hour," Lindstrom says, "and the hydrostatic pumps have really helped us improve that. We load and unload trucks and tankers really fast because volume produces revenue." The 10 straight trucks in his custom application business, all made from old garbage or cement trucks, haul 4,500 gal. Semi tankers that once hauled hot asphalt now haul 6,500 gal. of liquid manure. "If everything goes smoothly and efficiently we can empty a 1,000,000-gal. pit in 5 to 7 hrs.," Lindstrom says. "Tankers unload 6,500 gal. in ditch boxes in 2 minutes and are back on the road for more. In a good day we can load, unload and spread 250 to 350 truckloads that cover more than 200 acres."

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Pto-driven winch tower works like a ski lift to pull logs out of the woods.