Sarah Rasmussen and her dad built this 10-ft. tall trike complete with a 36-in. high front wheel. It's powered by a 5 1/2 hp Briggs & Stratton engine.

FARM SHOW® Ag World®

Sarah's Big Girl Trike Is A Hit

Sarah Rasmussen's 10-ft. tall 4-H mechanics project earned the 16-year-old a purple premium at the Wright County Fair and a blue ribbon at the Iowa State Fair this year.

"We had offers for as much as $2,200 to buy the front spoke wheel," says Sarah's co-builder and dad, Scott Rasmussen. "It came from our neighbor. It was laying in the grove, and we had to cut four trees growing through the spokes to get it."

With some grinding to clean it up and a few coats of paint by a professional painter, the wheel is in impressive shape. Finding a tire to fit was a bigger challenge. The Rasmussens had the 36-in. wheel for a while before a local tire dealer discovered a tire in the back of the shop that fit, and he sold it to them for $100.

Scott, who has restored 15 Deere tractors, and Sarah spent evenings and free time between Valentine's Day and June 30th creating the trike in time for the county fair. The trike is powered by a 5 1/2 hp Briggs & Stratton engine. They used parts they had on hand: a throttle cable from a 3-wheel bean buggy, a Deere B tractor seat, and diamond plate for the back deck.

"I learned a lot of basic skills on this project from my dad," Sarah says.

She cut the 2-in. square tubing for the frame, used a welder and cutting torch, and helped make design decisions.

For example, the back wheels (from an ear corn elevator) didn't turn correctly. She approved the solution of making the right tire a "dummy tire" and allowing the trike to steer off just the left tire.

Getting the right size sprocket to get the correct gear ratio was a little trickier. They ended up having one laser-cut at a machine shop, and then grinding the teeth to fit properly with a Dremel rotary tool.

In addition to a ladder to get to the seat, the Rasmussens added a couple of braces for stability. The driver pulls the engine cord to start the engine, climbs into the seat and engages the engine with the throttle. Pushing another lever forward shoves a piece of plate steel against the front tire for brakes.

"Sarah can go about 12 to 15 mph on it. I can only go about 10 mph," Scott says, because he's heavier. "But up there it feels like 40 mph."

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Arvid Miller's giant 3-wheeler sports a big front wheel with an 11.75 by 28-in. tire. The rear wheels are driven by a Kohler 25 hp, 2-cyl. engine.

Big Tricycle Powered By 25 Hp Engine

Arvid Miller, Ogden, Iowa, had a great time building a giant 3-wheeler that has become a big hit at parades and shows.

The big front wheel with an 11.75 by 28-in. tire was bought at a farm sale. The hydrostatic transmission and rear wheels came off an old Toro golf course mower. The frame was built from sq. tubing, as were the front forks and the front wheel steering spindle. The seat is off a Harley Davidson motorcycle, and the Sissy Bar is off an old motorcycle that his kids had years ago.

The rear wheels are driven by a Kohler 25 hp, 2-cyl. engine which mounts behind the rear wheels. The engine belt-drives a shaft that operates the transmission's hydrostatic pump. "A long throttle cable off a junked 4-wheeler leads to the foot feed. When I let off the pedal the machine stops," says Miller.

The machine is equipped with 3 foot pedals off a Wheel Horse riding mower. One serves as the throttle, one controls forward and reverse, and the other is used as a belt release. The handlebars are made from 1 1/4-in. electrical conduit.

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Wayne Timm sometimes drives his "big wheel" tricycle at antique tractor shows. The tricycle's 44-in. spoked front wheel is off an old Case ground-driven hay rake.

"Big Wheel" Tricycle

Wayne Timm, Kasota, Minn., pulls a home-built, over-sized Radio Flyer wagon behind his "big wheel" tricycle. Both the tricycle and wagon are painted IH red, with IH decals on the tricycle's fenders.

The tricycle's 44-in. spoked front wheel is off an old late 1940's Case ground-driven hay rake. The 15-in. high back wheels are off a more modern hay rake and are fitted with baby moon hubcaps. Power is provided by a 2 1/2 hp International Harvester LB engine equipped with a flywheel that runs off a camshaft.

To drive the rear wheels he cut down a Ford Model A transmission. The transmission connects to the rear end off an old Fiat car. He cut 1 ft. off each side of the transmission to narrow it up and then welded it back together.

The main frame is made from 2 1/2-in. dia. pipe. A pipe bender was used to curve the front forks. The handlebars measure 3 ft. across and are made from 1 1/2-in. electrical conduit. "In order to keep the conduit from buckling when I tried to bend it, I filled it with sand and then put wood plugs in each end," says Timm.

The front steering spindle was made out of a big cast gear that came off the hay rake. The front forks are made from 1-in. dia. pipe. To make the brakes he copied the brakes on an old Deere B tractor. He made a platform with a step on each side. The seat is off a Farmall tractor. He used old boat trailer fenders to make the rear fenders.

The wagon rides on 22-in. high car spare tires, bought for $1 apiece at an auto salvage yard. "I wanted to build the wagon twice as big as the original Radio Flyer wagon. It rides on 11-in. wheels, so the 22-in. wheels were perfect," says Timm.

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