



Conduit reels can be used to make inexpensive round bale feeders, says Dan Jost, who cuts the spokes away and uses a grinder to smooth rough spots on the rings.



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## Conduit Reels Make Great Bale, Grain Feeders

Dan Jost makes round bale feeders out of conduit reels. He has even used the big reels for roofing a feed wagon. Originally the reels carried rolls of heavy-duty conduit used to bury power and telephone lines.

"They're hard to find, but I knew a guy who had access to some," says Jost.

Each 8-ft. dia. reel side is formed from steel rings and eight, 4-ft. steel spokes that join at the center. Jost cut the spokes away and used his 6-in. grinder to smooth rough spots on the rings.

Using the rings and spokes, he made a fairly standard size bale feeder for the friend who provided the reels. He also built a shorter one for his own Lowline Angus. Between their smaller size and horns on some, a standard full-size feeder doesn't work.

"Both feeders have a lower section made from two rings and 16-in. lengths of spokes," says Jost. "I bought 16-in. wide strips of 18-gauge steel and welded it to the outside of the rings. I wanted it heavy enough to weld, to stand up to the cattle and to move around with a bale spear on my loader."

To finish his friend's full-size bale feeder, he added a third ring. Spreader bars mounted at an angle between the second and third ring give it a full height of about 45 in.

For the upper portion of his own feeder, Jost recycled U-shaped hoops from some old

Durabilt bale feeders. They were the right height and allowed an animal with horns to feed without getting snagged as he pulled away.

"I saw the Durabilt feeders in a pile at this farm," explains Jost. "I stopped and offered the owner \$10 for the lot, and he took it and then gave me some more hoops stacked up against a silo."

The hoops were still solid, though the remainder of the Durabilt's was rusted out. "I broke the hoops off and welded them to the top of the feeder rings," says Jost. "I ended up with enough hoops to make 2 more bale feeders."

Jost says the rings from the conduit reels have worked great for other projects as well. He fabricated a rounded steel roof over a feed wagon/feeder. He cut 5 rings to match the width of the wagon, added cross members and covered it with steel roofing. The half circle front end was cut from steel, while the rear end was made from wood with a door for checking feed levels. Jost made a top fill door, mounting it to rings at the front of the wagon.

Other changes to the wagon turned it into a feeder that handles the 8 head Jost normally feeds out each year. He replaced the rusted out floor with tongue and groove flooring and added a feeder tray at the back end using an



Jost also used the big reels to make a rounded steel roof over a feed wagon. Feeder tray on back was made from a scrapped auger tray.

auger tray from a scrapped out chopper. Jost designed a manual unloading auger, allowing him to move the feeder wagon as needed.

"I bought a 4-in. auger at auction for \$50, removed the motor and cut holes in the top of the auger tube," he said. "I cut a hole in the back end of the wagon and shoved the auger through."

With the auger reaching from one end to the other it can gather feed the length of the wagon. To fill the feeder tray, Jost simply turns the drive pulley by hand. To make it easier, he added a steering wheel knob.

"I just crank it round like a steering wheel

to fill the feeder tray," says Jost. "It's a flat floor so at some point I have to go inside and shovel feed to the end."

He says one fill of the feeding tray is about what his calves will eat in a day. While he could have automated it, the manual nature has an added benefit.

"I like to get into the yard with them to see how they are doing each day," says Jost. "Having to fill the tray makes sure I do."

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## Old Bucket Converted To Multi-Use Skid Steer Plate

Dave Wampler can pick up about anything with his skid steer, thanks to a multi-use plate adapted from an old Bobcat bucket.

"We use it to move forage harvester heads around, attach booms for general lifting, and forks for pallets and other stacked materials," says Wampler. "Originally, it was a quick-attach, tined bucket on our Bobcat."

He and his brother have used the tool to move forage headers for the past 10 years or more. They drive the harvester into their shop, lift the header away with an overhead hoist. Once away from the harvester, the hoist lowers it so it can be picked up by the plate-equipped skid steer and moved as needed.

"It is a lot easier than trying to pick it up with a loader bucket and secure it with chains," says Wampler. "With the mounts on the plate, the header is secure and easy to move. We can take it to storage, grab another header and return it to be mounted on the harvester with the help of the chain hoist."

The key to this use and others is multiple mounts added to the plate. Holes in the bottom sill plate make it easy to slip in forks for forklift work. Other mounts include twin, foot-long sections of 2-in. pipe. They slip through short chunks of 2-in. sq. tubing, which in turn are welded to the plate. Half inch steel rod, also welded to the plate, wraps

around and is welded to the square tubing to reinforce it. The pipes are pinned in place for easy removal.

"I like to make things so they can slip on and off quickly," says Wampler.

In order to move a forage header, he attaches mounting brackets to the plate that match the harvester pickup points. They consist of 2 pieces of 2-in. square tubing welded at a right angle and gusseted with triangular pieces of steel at the inside joint of the legs.

The vertical leg has a 4-in. length of 2-in. steel tubing welded to the outside top of the leg. A clevis style joint with a section of 2-in. pipe is welded to the inside top of the leg.

To attach the legs, Wampler slides the pipes to one side and then back through the steel tubes on the legs. Once the pipes are secure, the legs can be adjusted to the right or left to match the spacing between the clevis mounts on the headers. The horizontal leg portions of the brackets slide under and help raise the header, similar to shoes on the harvester.

A second mount consists of a 1/2-in. thick steel plate butt-welded to the center top edge of the plate. Wampler uses it as the anchor point for his quick attaching booms.

"We have a 3-ft. boom with a 5-ft. long attachment," says Wampler. "With the 5-ft.



Dave Wampler converted a quick-attach, tined bucket on his Bobcat skid loader into this multi-use plate. He uses it to move forage harvester heads around, and for other hauling jobs.

boom on the plate, we can raise the end 12 ft. in the air."

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