

Treadmill Moves Firewood Fast

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

Tom Cahill of Amery, Wis., is looking for a free or cheap treadmill – not to exercise on, but to fill his basement with firewood this fall. His last treadmill moved about 14 cords of firewood over two seasons before it fell apart.

If this sounds familiar, you may have been one of the 20 million people who saw the YouTube video last winter of Cahill and his friend Jake Cramlet throwing firewood onto a treadmill that extended into a basement window.

“I was sick of the awkward repetitive movement it took to get wood into the small window and the damage it was causing to the window sill. I thought, what would be the cheapest conveyor?” says Cahill, who works as a civil engineering technician.

He posted a request for a treadmill on Facebook and within 20 minutes a friend offered him one for free. Cahill removed the front legs, guides and other unnecessary parts so that the treadmill fit up against the

basement window opening.

“The faster you run it the farther you can throw the wood,” he says, noting when set at full speed his treadmill threw wood about 10 ft. into the basement.

Other than tightening the belt a few times, there weren’t any major glitches, and Cahill improved on the setup seen in the video. He added a chute to feed to the treadmill so he and Cramlet could stand up.

“It saves hours of work carrying wood, kneeling down to throw it and getting back up,” Cahill says.

“There’s more time to drink Bud Light,” he adds with a laugh. “There’s a nice cup holder right on the treadmill.”

After Cahill’s photographer sister, Joy Cahill, posted a video on Facebook, it went viral. Though the video (YouTube.com, Guys Use Treadmill to Transport Firewood) has drawn worldwide YouTube attention, Cahill hasn’t had any personal media attention



Tom Cahill moves firewood fast by throwing it onto a treadmill that extends into his basement window.

regarding his redneck engineering. He was happy to share his story with FARM SHOW readers.

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Gary Josephson’s horse-drawn round bale retriever is equipped with an electric-over-hydraulic lift, allowing him to pick up bales and drop them where he wants.

Horses Pull Big Bale Retriever

Gary Josephson’s draft horse team hauls in the big round bales they’ll later eat. His horse-drawn bale retriever is an electric-over-hydraulic lift that lets Josephson pick up the bales and drop them where he wants.

“I like working with horses,” says Josephson. “I can haul 15 to 20 bales on a single charge of the battery and then recharge it overnight.”

Josephson started with a back axle and frame off an old trailer. The axle was long enough that the wheels fit around the end of a bale. He cut the front third of the trailer frame off and reattached it over the rear frame. This raised it enough to mount a front axle with truck wheels under it.

The front wheel hubs mount to pipes welded to a short length of 2 by 3-in. angle iron. The spindle between the angle iron and the wagon frame is a loose pipe in pipe post.

“There isn’t much weight on the front end, so I didn’t need a bearing,” says Josephson. “A heavy bale on the back end can raise the front end some, but never enough for the pipes to slide apart completely.”

To make the hitch, he welded two 1-ft. lengths of pipe to the angle iron, parallel to the ground with pipe stubs welded to their forward ends. The double tree evener attaches to a pipe that rotates inside the stubs as the

wagon rides over uneven ground.

The bale spear is welded to an angle iron and pipe frame. It rides on a steel rod that rotates inside two pairs of steel tabs, which are in turn welded to the heavy steel pipe axle. Each pair is welded to opposite sides of the pipe at each side of the spear frame.

The lift cylinder is mounted to the frame of the wagon with the pump. It’s powered by a deep cell battery also mounted at the front of the wagon.

“It took some figuring to get the cylinder set in the right place so it would lift the bale high enough,” he adds. “I have a remote control button that activates the hydraulics and releases pressure to drop the bale or tip the frame back to spear a bale.”

Josephson likes using his team for light work, whether hauling bales, dragging hay fields, or using his packer fabricated from press wheels. In keeping with his Canadian heritage, his team are Canadiennes, an increasingly rare breed.

“They’re sensible, easy to train and easy to work with,” he says.

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He started with the rear axle and frame off an old trailer and added a front axle with truck wheels under it.

How To Price A Conservation Plan

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

If you’re considering adding a conservation practice or feature to your farm, an Iowa-based engineering service can help. The company, Agren, does remote engineering and pricing of conservation practices. The only catch is that the land needs to be LiDAR mapped. LiDAR data shows exact elevations of land at 8,000 data points per acre.

“I expect that 80 to 90 percent of all crop land from central Nebraska to the East Coast has been LiDAR mapped,” says Tom Buman, Agren. “The problem is that LiDAR data acquisition is a hodgepodge system with multiple agencies in a state involved. It varies from county to county.”

Winona County, Minn., where I live, has been LiDAR mapped so I recently asked Buman to demonstrate his PondBuilder software. I was interested in putting in a pond on my 75-acre farm. Using the LiDAR map of the farm and his proprietary conservation planning software, it took him only a few minutes to identify and analyze the site. A few minutes more and he was able to produce a computer image of the pond, dam and a full description with estimated costs of construction.

Under NRCS guidelines, the steep wooded slopes of the 22.7-acre drainage area required a 37-ft. tall dam with a top width of 15 ft. It would require 165 ft. of 18-in. dia. pipe and excavating 546 cubic yards of dirt for the basin. Then I would have to find another 34,000 cubic yards for fill.

Granted I would have had a beautiful 3-acre pond with a maximum depth of 30 ft. Unfortunately, Buman told me the total cost would run \$92,720, and it would be silted in in 35 years. Then there was the 34,000 cubic yards of dirt that would have to be scraped off the fields below.

I didn’t even have to look over the 11 pages of data his computer sent my way to know I probably wouldn’t proceed. But then, that is part of the beauty of Buman’s software. It takes him minutes to do what NRCS engineers would require days to do by hand...once they got to me, which is part of the problem Buman is trying to solve.

“NRCS can only provide technical assistance to a small percentage of farmers each year,” he says. “There are simply not enough technicians to help farmers get needed conservation practices on the ground.”

In addition to PondBuilder, Buman offers software for designing waterways, wetlands and basins to trap and hold water and sediment. And the company’s SoilCalculator lets clients plug in various crop rotations, tillage systems and conservation practices to compare erosion predictions for up to three scenarios.

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