Lengths of pvc pipe screwed to posts stand up to abuse better than store-bought terminals. Wire runs through holes drilled into pipe (left). Wire "piglet fingers" (right) placed at 2-ft. intervals hang about 6 in. off ground to keep piglets in.

Electric Fence "Fixes" Help Keep Pigs Confined

By Klaire Howerton

In order to keep his pigs where they were supposed to be for his farm's rotational grazing program, Caleb Howerton of Springfield, Mo., made some improvements to his electric fence system.

One thing he noticed was that the plastic on store-bought electric fence terminals would become brittle from being out in the sun. He needed a stronger terminal that had more length than traditional 2-in. store-bought screw-in insulator terminals, since he also had a problem with the pigs pushing the electric wire up against his hard fencing and gates, which caused the fence to short out. PVC turned out to be the answer. Caleb used thick walled ½-in. pvc pipe cut into 7-in. lengths; 2 in. of the length of pvc fits into pre-drilled holes in the wooden gate posts and is secured by 1 ½-in. screws going through the pipe into the wood at an angle, and the remaining 5 in. comes out of the posts. Holes were drilled into the exposed end of the pvc to run the electric wire through.

Another electric fence improvement Caleb made was to keep his piglets in their respective paddocks. Piglets can fit under electric wires that adult pigs can't, so Caleb created what he calls "piglet fingers". They're made from 8-in. long pieces of electric wire that are wrapped tightly around the fence wire and then pointed toward the ground. Caleb placed these along his regular bottom fence wire (which is about 6 to 8 inches off the ground) at 2-ft. intervals. The result is that when piglets try to duck under the fence, they are shocked by the dangling piglet fingers. These can be made shorter or longer depending on how high the bottom fence wire is off the ground.

Since making these changes to his fence system, Caleb said that the pigs have become much easier and more convenient to manage.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Caleb Howerton, 1008 E. Farm Rd. 54, Springfield, Mo. 65803.

Steel bracket slips over exposed cylinder rod. As loader is lowered, its weight secures brackets and pressure on valves is released so they're free to use for other jobs.

"Loader Holders" Free Up Hydraulics

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

Using a set of "loader holders" on my 3930 Ford diesel lets me use its single set of hydraulic valves to power other equipment. Without the loader holders, I would have to dismount the loader to use hydraulics for other uses.

The brackets, which slip over the clevis and exposed cylinder rod, were the brainchild of my local mechanics. When I spoke with them about what it would take to add a set of remotes to the tractor, they asked whether or not I would need to use the loader hydraulics at the same time as a hydraulically actuated implement. I didn't think that was likely.

The next day I had my brackets. They are 7 in. long, 3-sided, 2 by 2-in. steel channels. Tabs welded to the ends lay across the rod clevises when the brackets are set over the cylinder rods.

The tabs hold the brackets in place, with the cylinder barrel resting against the brackets, until the loader is lowered to about 3 ft. above the ground. At that point, the weight of the loader secures the brackets, and pressure on the valves is released so they're free to use for other things.

My local New Holland dealer quoted $2,000 for a factory kit to add 2 remote hydraulic valves. My brackets cost me $12.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jim Ruen, 33750 Forster Rd., La Crescent, Minn. 55947 (507 895-2229; farmshowjim@gmail.com).

Bucket-mounted brush hauler fits over tines on loader bucket. Brush saw is welded to a forklift fork that attaches to bucket floor. Mathis tilts bucket as he drives saw into roots.

Brush Hauler Quick-Taches To Tractor Loader Bucket

Rondle Mathis was satisfied with the first brush hauler he built for his ATV (FARM SHOW, Vol. 39, Issue 1) until he decided he needed something bigger.

Mathis built the ATV brush hauler with the idea to easily maneuver in the wooded areas on his Blairsville, Georgia, property. But long term the ATV suspension wasn't strong enough - even after being beefed up - to handle his 155-lb. hauler and the size of the loads he wanted to carry.

"I got tired of making so many trips, so I made one for my 30 hp. Kubota tractor," Mathis explains. He started by adding forks to his tractor bucket. For the brush hauler, he made the tines and back braces out of 1 1/2-in. angle iron and welded two 2 by 4 gussets to slide on the forks. They are held in place by screwing down T-handle bolts.

"It is easy for the tractor to handle (about 50 lbs.). I can make a big pile and it goes much faster," Mathis says.

He's been using the hauler for about half a year to clear property on the side of a ridge.

"The only thing is I can haul such a big pile of brush that sometimes I can't see where I'm going," Mathis says with a laugh.

When he needs the tractor for other jobs, he loosens the bolts and slides the 50-lb. brush hauler off.

To use his tractor even more, he recently built a brush saw that mounts on his bucket. He cut teeth out of a piece of 1/4-in. by 4-in. flat bar and welded it to a forklift fork attached to the bucket with a 1-in. bolt.

"It cuts brush up to about 2-in. pretty good," Mathis says. "I put it at about a 25-degree angle and drive it into the roots." He adds that it also works for digging a trench.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rondle Mathis, 441 Foxfire Rd., Blairsville, Ga. 30512 (rondle@tds.net).

Lindsay Gillis needed to smooth out his pasture, so he built this 14-ft. wide by 6 1/2-ft. drag out of pipe and old Caterpillar dozer rails.

"Dozer Rail" Drag Leaves Field Smooth

Lindsay Jay Gillis built a drag out of a long 4-in. dia. pipe and a pair of old dozer rails off a Caterpillar D-4 bulldozer, with the grouser pads removed. The 14-ft. wide drag is 6 1/2 ft. long.

Gillis uses a Farmall 400 tractor and pulls it with chains from the front two corners hitched to the drag pipe.

"The drag floats with the contour of the field and helps smooth the ground and spread manure piles," says Gillis. "I also use it during the spring in fields where cattle have spent the winter. I can tow it straight behind the tractor or angle it in either direction," he says.

The dozer rails are connected to the pipe, and to each other, by chains that run under 3-ft. lengths of 6-in. channel iron. The channel irons are bolted on between the pipe and rails, and between the 2 sets of rails using existing holes.

"The chains are connected at both ends by eye bolts and do all the pulling. The channel irons are there mainly to keep the rails level, instead of folding upward over rough ground," says Gillis. "For anyone who has very rough ground, the track from a larger dozer could be used."

He says his home-built drag didn't cost much. "I already had the channel irons and a dozer, with worn out tracks. I got the pipe from an old gas line that ran across our property."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Lindsay Jay Gillis, P. O. Box 198, 1051 Maiden St., Beallsville, Penn. 15313 (ph 412 997-2775).