Mobile water tank mounts on its own trailer and comes with a float system and optional solar-powered pump.

To set up the tank, just flip it off its trailer and telescope the frame out to its full length.

Water Tanks Travel Light, Set Up Fast

Mobile water tanks from Tomcat Mfg. are designed to move easily and set up fast. The tough, lightweight tanks mount on their own trailers, complete with durable float systems and optional solar-powered pumps.

"We consult with people on rotational grazing, and everyone we talked to said water was their biggest issue," says Austin Swaney, Tomcat Mfg. "We thought, why not move the water around and break up the paddocks by what's good for the land, not in order to have water access?"

The company had been and still does design in-ground, geothermal heated tanks. However, like water holes, cattle congregated around the tanks and trampled the grass.

"Go to any waterhole, and the grass is trampled down for 30 yds. around," says Swaney. "A mobile tank can be moved regularly to keep that from happening."

Tomcat offers 250 and 500-gal. capacity Keyhole waterers. Both have 18-in. high telescoping 1 by 1-in. steel frames with high puncture strength vinyl liners. The smaller model measures 4 by 6 ft., and the larger tank 4 by 12 ft.

They are adaptable to any water source and can be equipped with a solar pump to draw water from up to a quarter mile away. "They can be towed into place with a 4-wheeler," says Swaney. "At the site, just flip the tank off its trailer and telescope the frame out to its full length. If you can dead lift 50 lbs., you can move it into place."

The 250-gal. waterer is priced at $1,499. The 500-gal. one is priced at $1,899. The solar-powered pump option adds $2,500 to the base prices.

Swaney notes that the 18-in. height allows calves and sheep easy access to water.

The larger Missouri 1,000-gal. capacity waterer has 24-in. high sides and is 6 by 12 ft. long. It is available with either a rugged vinyl liner or a hard poly tank. The tank's frame is integrated into its trailer. Towed to the watering site, the front corners of the tank frame are unpinned from the front of the trailer frame. This allows the tank to settle to the ground, and the tongue rises up into the air. Connect the float to the water lines, and the tank is ready for use.

The Missouri's base price is $4,600. Adding a higher rail to keep out taller livestock raises the price to $5,000. Adding a guard railing and solar panel with pump brings the price to $8,500.

The vinyl liners are the same as firefighters use for their portable tanks. Swaney notes that the liners and hard poly tanks come with a stepped warranty. It includes a no-cost replacement the first year, gradually increasing by 25 percent increments to the full manufacturer's price in year five.

"We will customize the height of the top rail to the customer's livestock," says Swaney. "We make the tanks low, as we found that calves often can't reach the water in most big stock tanks."

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Handy Ideas Keep Cattle Watered

A tank sled and a pressure gauge make it easier to keep Michael Isaksson's 50 head of cattle well-watered. The sled keeps the water tub from being knocked over, and the gauge lets him check for leaks or other problems with the waterlines running to his pastures.

"I've been pasturing cattle for 50 years and practicing rotational grazing for half as long," says Isaksson. "Until I built the water sled, the 60-gal. tank would get tipped over several times a year, and the float would often get damaged. Now it just slides if the cattle push against it."

Isaksson's tank sled is a simple framework of 2 by 6-in. pressure-treated lumber that brackets the tank. The framework is mounted to 1-in. skid boards, making it easy to pull into place as needed.

"The low sides let me slide it up against a fence so cattle of all sizes can drink from either side," says Isaksson.

Adding a pressure gauge to the water lines that go to the cattle was a simple way to keep an eye on water pressure. Most of his mile-long water line is 2-in., and a leak or break can waste a lot of water before it's discovered.

"I installed the gauge close to the road and to the house, so it is easy to see," says Isaksson. "I can recognize if leaks or problems occur. If the pressure drops, I can shut off the pump, so it doesn't keep running. It doesn't prevent problems, but I can recognize them faster."

A tank sled keeps Michael Isaksson's water tub from being knocked over by cattle, and a pressure gauge lets him keep an eye on water line pressure.

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Motorized, Walk-Behind "Sweet Corn Cart"

William Davis, Masontown, W. Va., recently sent FARM SHOW photos of a walk-behind motorized "sweet corn cart" he made using parts from a pair of riding mowers. The one-row, self-propelled machine is designed to hold 7 bu. of sweet corn. And Davis points out his cart could also be used to bring other kinds of produce in from the field.

The cart measures 4 ft. long by 30 in. wide, allowing it to fit between 30-in. rows. Power is provided by a 3 1/2 hp. gas engine and 3-speed transmission off a Dynamark riding mower. The operator pulls back on a "tilt back" steering wheel, which engages the transmission's clutch to propel the cart forward. Speed can vary from a creep to a slow walk.

The box is made from 1/2-in. thick plywood and attached to an angle iron subframe. It can be tilted forward for access to the engine, and also comes with a fold-down tailgate on front.

"I built it several years ago to harvest 2 or 3 acres of sweet corn, and it works great. I spent only about $100 to build it," says Davis, who sells the corn to local stores and at farmer's markets, as well as at roadside stands. "We pick the corn by hand and throw it into the cart, and also unload it by hand into bags for storage. It's a lot easier to use than a wheelbarrow, and has much more capacity. Even with the transmission in high gear, the engine has more than enough power to transport a full load anywhere."

The cart rides on the Dynamark front and rear axles. However, the Dynamark wheels were too wide to fit 30-in. rows so Davis replaced them with the narrower wheels off a Snapper riding mower. He also narrowed up the front axle by removing the spindles and using 2-in. channel iron to build a new axle, and then reattaching the spindles. The rear wheels are attached to the Dynamark transaxle.

The steering wheel is alsooff the Dynamark mower. It's attached to a bearing at the top of a pipe that mounts on a univeral joint. "Tilting the steering wheel back tightens a belt that runs from the engine to the Dynamark transaxle," says Davis.

Motorized, walk-behind "sweet corn cart" was made using parts from a pair of riding mowers. Operator pulls back on steering wheel to propel cart forward.

The machine's hand throttle and gearshift lever are off an old push mower, with the gearshift lever attached to the Dynamark's transaxle.

The cart's box measures 30 in. high. To raise the sides and increase capacity, Davis inserts a 3-sided, 1/8-in. thick plywood box inside the cart. A 2 by 2 "lip" rests on the cart sides. "Once the box is partially loaded, I lift the plywood box a few inches. After that, the weight of the corn keeps the box in place," says Davis.

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