

Do-It-Yourself Cattle Guards

Reusable plastic forms make it easy and low-cost to build your own concrete cattle guards. A form produces 21-in. wide by 6-ft. long sections that are laid side by side to make the desired livestock barrier. They can be laid on level ground, require no special foundation, and can handle a 32,000-lb. per axle load.

There are other do-it-yourself concrete forms on the market but farmers and ranchers told Richard Roccati, Cattle Guard Forms, that they wanted reusable forms.

The Cow Stop was the company's answer. It makes rounded beams with 4 1/2-in. gaps between them. The gaps narrow to 2-in. widths at the base, preventing the hoof from getting trapped, yet discouraging the animal from trying to cross.

Once the concrete cures, the form (pretreated with a release agent) is removed and reused. Roccati says the heavy-duty plastic forms are made to last. Simply lift the hardened concrete section into the air and tap

the form loose with a rubber mallet.

"I know people who report pouring 100 fills or more in a single form," says Roccati. "Of course, if they are replacing many gates or making the cattle guard panels to sell, they usually buy multiple forms. Our average customer buys one and makes 2 sections a week."

Roccati took over marketing the forms from inventor James Hoenstine. He developed an online presence. The forms are also available at Tractor Supply and other agricultural suppliers.

The reusable Cow Stop sells for \$799. Roccati says Farm Show prices run \$100 less. Shipping varies but Cattle Guard Forms offers a flat rate of \$99.

"We give a better price if you buy 2 or more," says Roccati. "The great thing is that once you are done making cattle guards for your own use, you can sell the forms to a neighbor or others. We're told they often sell



Reusable plastic forms make rounded beams with 4 1/2-in. gaps between them, which narrow to 2 in. wide at the base to prevent hooves from getting trapped.

for half of the new price."

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Triangle-shaped calf shelter is designed for good air flow and ventilation, and has a skylight to help keep bedding dry.

Calf Shelter Designed To Produce Healthier Calves

Charlie Raml designed his calf shelter to keep calves healthy and their owners' jobs easier. It has several innovative design features that earned it multiple patents.

"We started designing it in 2015, applied for patents, and started producing them in 2017," says Raml, Iron Ranch Mfg. "Our shelters are designed to make life easier for the farmer and the calf."

The unique design, with its sloped sides, came out of discussions Raml had with veterinarians, animal scientists and cattlemen. "They emphasized the need for air flow and ventilation," says Raml. "The skylight helps keep bedding dry and bacteria in check. The light also encourages the calves to enter. They don't like dark places."

The 31-in. high calf door centered on the front of the shelter provides good airflow into the triangular shaped structure. It also maintains a consistent temperature throughout the shelter.

Raml designed the shelter with sloped sides front and back so high winds would flow up and over. "Any shelter with straight walls can be flipped over with high enough winds," says Raml. "I have a couple hundred of these shelters out with cattlemen and have yet to have one flip over."

Raml gives his cattleman father credit for the 6 1/2-ft. tall entry door at the end of the shelter. "He told me he was too old and too fat to crawl into a shelter," says Raml. "I recall all too well crawling through mud and manure to spread straw or check calves in shelters as one of my jobs growing up."

Raml's father also suggested a gate that can shut up the shelter when a calf needs to be caught. It rests above the calf door when not in use, pivoting into place when needed.

Raml makes 3 models of the shelter. All are 8 ft. tall at the center and 8 1/2 ft. wide. Lengths include 12, 24 and 32 ft. All are designed to fit on a gooseneck or semi-trailer for transport. He has also made shelters customized to special needs.

He notes that the 12-ft. length is popular for use with smaller livestock. A double pipe frame around the bottom keeps pigs from rooting against the tin siding. It is priced at \$1,400.

The 24-ft. long shelter can hold up to 32 calves. It is the most popular and is priced at \$2,400. The 32-ft. model is priced at \$3,200.

When designing the shelter, Raml included a lifting bar to make it easy to move the shelter to fresh ground in a calving yard.

He also makes windbreaks that set up in minutes and also have lifting bars so they can be handled by a loader tractor.

"I can set up my windbreaks in 90 sec. by myself with a tractor loader bucket," says Raml.

The windbreak panels are 24 ft. long and 12 1/2 ft. high. They are priced at \$800 each or \$975 with a kit that converts them to shade panels in the summer.

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BriteTap Chicken Waterer spigot is designed to replace the spigot on Igloo or Rubbermaid beverage coolers.

"BriteTap" Provides Cool, Clean Water For Flock

The BriteTap® Chicken Waterer is designed for small backyard flocks, making it easy to provide water as clean and cool as expensive watering systems in large poultry operations.

It's designed to fit a beverage cooler from Igloo or Rubbermaid brands. Just remove the spigot and replace it with the chicken waterer spigot. At \$19.99 for a spigot (with two waterers), plus the cost of a cooler, it's an inexpensive way to provide the 8 oz. of clean water a chicken needs every day.

"What makes it work so well is that it's a closed system so nothing contaminates the water," says Mark Delman, general manager of the company. "It also has plugs to clean out the interior. And, because the beverage cooler is the water supply tank, water stays cool in the summer."

Designed so chickens can't perch on it, the spigot always stays clean. The red and silver colors attract chickens' natural instincts to peck at things so they quickly learn how to use it. When the chicken's beak hits the long metal valve stem, it disengages the rubber gasket and releases water in the red cup right into its mouth.

Delman notes that he introduced the waterer in 2012, but upgraded it last year with

one larger, cleanout-plug, instead of two. It is made of silicone to be more durable and UV-resistant, and the unit is BPA-free.

He tells customers to remove their old watering units when introducing BriteTap. After the chickens eat and are looking for water, let some water run out so they see it. Once one chicken figures it out, the rest will follow suit.

"It should be kept at beak height," Delman adds.

Besides beverage coolers, the waterer can be inserted in drilled holes of plastic buckets and other containers. BriteTap can be used to water chicks more than 2 weeks old, ducks, quail, guinea fowl and rabbits. Delman also offers Freeze Free nipples to use with bucket deicers in heated coops.

The BriteTap Chicken Waterer is available, through its website and on Amazon as well as at about 200 stores throughout the U.S. Wholesale and dealer inquiries are welcome.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, ChickenWaterer.com, LLC, 265 Cambridge Ave., Box 60881, Palo Alto, Calif. 94306 (ph 321 348-8378; www.chickenwaterer.com; mark@chickenwaterer.com).

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