

Cattle Cams Save Time, Labor

Travis Peardon can check his watering tanks and his 250 cows by phone. Cameras he can access with apps make it fast and easy. With a full-time job as Saskatchewan Agriculture livestock and feed specialist, Peardon can't always be close by.

"I have a camera set up at a wintering site half a mile from the buildings and another set up in the cattle yard," says Peardon. "They were easy to set up and are easy to use. I can be away for the weekend and know the cattle are getting water."

Peardon described his cattle cam setup in a recent issue of *On Pasture*, the online magazine for graziers, and later shared the information with *FARM SHOW*.

His setup consists of a \$350 game camera from Cabela's that he moves to remote sites as needed, and a wifi-connected camera from Allan Leigh Security (www.precisioncam.ca). There are many wifi camera systems at Amazon and other retailers.

"The game camera is normally powered by AAA batteries, but last year we added a solar backpack charger to it," says Peardon. "I downloaded the phone app for it. I can program it to take pictures a certain time of the day or let motion trigger it. It provides 100 free photos a month."

He set it up to take pictures 3 times a day. Images are automatically transmitted to his phone, as well as to his farming partner father.

The calving security camera offers more



Cameras connected to smart phone app make it easy for Peardon to know his cattle are getting water.

control options and constantly transmits video via Wi-Fi to the house for monitoring from his camera or portable tablet. He can get pen-wide views or zoom in on a cow or a watering tank for a close-up view. If the herd is spooked, he can go out to see what's happened.

"We had -45 degree windchills, and I could check the water bowls from my phone," says Peardon. "It is amazing what you can see. It's technology that everyone needs. The payback in time and labor is a matter of days or weeks. I can be gone for my son's weekend hockey tournament and know the cattle and water sources are fine."

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Stalk Knockers set at a 20-degree angle, hovering about 3 1/2 in. above the ground and bending stalks forward away from combine tires.

Simple Stalk Knockers Protect Combine Tires

"Our new Stalk Knockers can save you a set of combine drive tires, and you don't have to remove them when hauling your cornhead on a trailer," says Dave McGargill, Randolph, Iowa.

He and his brother Kenny, who both farm, came up with the idea about 2 years ago. He explains that Stalk Knockers attach to the header using the same bolts that hold the snapper roller gearbox. The 10-in. wide, 1/4-in. thick steel plates set at a 20-degree angle, hovering about 3 1/2 in. above the ground and bending the stalks forward so they point away from the tires.

"It's a simple design that keeps the cost down with no chains, bearings or springs. They sell for only about one third as much as most other combine-mounted devices that flatten stalks," says McGargill. "Another advantage is that Stalk Knockers hit the stalk about half way down and break it open just above the brace root. That creates a better seedbed the following spring and can help

minimize the need for additional tillage passes."

Stalk Knockers can be mounted on all rows including the 2 under the head's feederhouse. "Most other devices attach to the back side of the head, with no place to attach them under the feederhouse. The forward design also means the plates stay on the row better when going around corners," says McGargill.

Stalk Knockers are designed for Deere, Case IH, Drago GT, Geringhoff, Cat Lexion, Gleaner, New Holland, and Capella combine heads. They sell for \$98 per row plus S&H.

McGargill says later this spring they will introduce a new "super flex" Stalk Knockers model that's designed to absorb shock. A limited supply will be available.

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Unruh needed a crimper to turn 8 to 11-ft. tall mustard plants into mulch in his walnut orchard, so he built this 3-pt. mounted, 3-roller model.

He Uses Home-Built Roller Crimper To Boost Soil Health

Daniel Unruh's shop-built roller crimper turns 8 to 11-ft. tall mustard plants into a soil-building mulch in his walnut orchard.

"I had a bad problem with nematodes in my walnut orchards," recalls Unruh. "So I started planting brassica-based cover crops like mustard, and they got rid of the nematodes."

However, Unruh discovered shredding the tall mustards created another problem. The heavy mass of green material crusted over on top, cutting off oxygen and creating anaerobic conditions underneath.

"Anaerobic bacteria is bad for soil health, plus the shredding took a lot of power," says Unruh. "I started thinking about using a roller crimper. I could get a 22-ft. model, but I needed a 21-ft. one to fit between the rows."

He came up with a 3-pt. hitch, 3-roller design that continues to do the job. He has since built a single, 8-ft. roller for a front loader mount and a 3-ft. wide roller for use behind a lawn and garden tractor. He's currently working on his fourth roller crimper, 10-ft. wide with a 3-pt. mount.

His first roller crimper features a 6 by 6-in., 1/4-in. thick, rectangular tubing frame with a 3-pt. mount. The front wing rollers are 7 ft. long with a 7-ft. gap. They fold up for transit. The third roller is 9 ft. long, overlapping the gap by a foot to either side.

He used 1/2-in. thick well pipe for the drum with 4-in. wide, 3/4-in. steel flutes welded in a chevron-shaped design around the drum. His latest roller uses 3/8-in. well pipe for the drum and 1/2-in. thick by 2 1/2-in. wide steel flutes.

"I wanted the first one heavy enough and aggressive enough that I knew it would work," says Unruh. "I've gradually backed off on the weight and size of the flutes on later



His 3-ft. wide crimper is designed to be pulled by a garden tractor.

models, but they still work well."

What doesn't change with his designs is the flutes spanning each other. "I want each flute to span at least one other," he says. "I keep getting the flute angle sharper with each one I build. With the latest one, parts of 3 chevrons are all touching the ground at the same time."

Unruh enjoys fabricating during the winter when he isn't farming. Building roller crimpers is a nice fit, and he likes the challenge.

"I customize each one for what the person plans to do and what they have to lift and pull it with," he says.

If someone was interested in his 21-ft. wide, triple roller crimper, he estimates it would cost in the mid to upper \$30,000 range.

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"Triple Duty" 3-Pt. Attachments

Latest new equipment for subcompact tractors is this 3-pt. mounted pallet fork attachment that doubles as a log hitch and receiver hitch.

The patent-pending attachment comes with removable or foldable fork tines, a 3/8-in. grab hook, and a built-in receiver hitch. The frame has a pair of welded-on steel loops on each side which the forks pin onto.

"It's designed for subcompact tractors under 30 hp. We offer a lot of of unique attachments for that market, and as far as I know there's nothing like this new one in North America," says John Bentley, Earth & Turf Attachments, New Holland, Penn. "The forks come in handy for moving pallets loaded with firewood or other material. By removing the back pins from the forks, you can pivot them up vertically to minimize the storage space needed. By pulling all the pins, you can remove the forks and use just the log hitch and/or receiver hitch."

The log hitch provides a "lift and carry" skid that results in cleaner logs and reduced damage to the ground, says Bentley. A front-



Earth & Turf's 3-pt. pallet fork attachment comes with removable, foldable fork tines, and doubles as a log hitch and receiver hitch.

end loader or front weights are required for operation.

The 3-pt. attachment sells for \$498 plus shipping. "It comes in a 12 by 12 by 36-in. box that can be shipped by Fedex ground to reduce the shipping cost," says Bentley.

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